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THE RELIGIOUS QUEST OF INDIA

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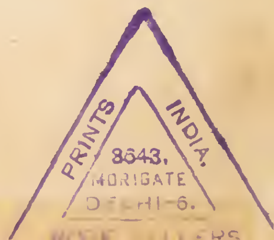
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VOLUMES IN PREPARATION

THE RELIGIOUS LITERATURE OF INDIA.	By J. N. Farquhar, M.A.
THE RELIGION OF THE ṚIG VEDA.	By H. D. Griswold, M.A., Ph.D.
THE VEDĀNTA . . .	By A. G. Hogg, M.A., Christian College, Madras.
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EDITORIAL PREFACE

THE writers of this series of volumes on the variant forms of religious life in India are governed in their work by two impelling motives.

I. They endeavour to work in the sincere and sympathetic spirit of science. They desire to understand the perplexingly involved developments of thought and life in India and dispassionately to estimate their value. They recognize the futility of any such attempt to understand and evaluate, unless it is grounded in a thorough historical study of the phenomena investigated. In recognizing this fact they do no more than share what is common ground among all modern students of religion of any repute. But they also believe that it is necessary to set the practical side of each system in living relation to the beliefs and the literature, and that, in this regard, the close and direct contact which they have each had with Indian religious life ought to prove a source of valuable light. For, until a clear understanding has been gained of the practical influence exerted by the habits of worship, by the practice of the ascetic, devotional or occult discipline, by the social organization and by the family system, the real impact of the faith upon the life of the individual and the community cannot be estimated; and, without the advantage of extended personal intercourse, a trustworthy account of the religious experience of a community can scarcely be achieved by even the most careful student.

II. They seek to set each form of Indian religion by the side of Christianity in such a way that the relationship may stand out clear. Jesus Christ has become to them the light of all their seeing, and they believe Him destined to be the light of

the world. They are persuaded that sooner or later the age-long quest of the Indian spirit for religious truth and power will find in Him at once its goal and a new starting-point, and they will be content if the preparation of this series contributes in the smallest degree to hasten this consummation. If there be readers to whom this motive is unwelcome, they may be reminded that no man approaches the study of a religion without religious convictions, either positive or negative: for both reader and writer, therefore, it is better that these should be explicitly stated at the outset. Moreover, even a complete lack of sympathy with the motive here acknowledged need not diminish a reader's interest in following an honest and careful attempt to bring the religions of India into comparison with the religion which to-day is their only possible rival, and to which they largely owe their present noticeable and significant revival.

It is possible that to some minds there may seem to be a measure of incompatibility between these two motives. The writers, however, feel otherwise. For them the second motive reinforces the first: for they have found that he who would lead others into a new faith must first of all understand the faith that is theirs already,—understand it, moreover, sympathetically, with a mind quick to note not its weaknesses alone but that in it which has enabled it to survive and has given it its power over the hearts of those who profess it.

The duty of the editors of the series is limited to seeing that the volumes are in general harmony with the principles here described. Each writer is alone responsible for the opinions expressed in his volume, whether in regard to Indian religions or to Christianity.

THE RELIGIOUS QUEST OF INDIA

INDIAN THEISM

FROM THE VEDIC TO THE MUḤAMMADAN PERIOD

BY

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PREFACE

THE greater part of this book was submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Letters of the University of Glasgow. As it is now published it has been considerably enlarged, several chapters having been added. In its preparation I have not had the advantage of consulting Sir Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar's detailed treatment of most of the subject in his *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, which appeared a year ago. By that time the manuscript was already complete, and it was only possible to make use of this work in one or two footnotes. That is the more to be regretted as this is a subject on which no one can speak with such authority and such knowledge as this venerable scholar, who is himself an adherent of the school of *bhakti*. No one who knows 'Dr. Bhandarkar', as his friends still prefer to call him, could treat with anything but deep respect a religious movement of which at its highest he may be said to be the representative.

I desire to acknowledge with much gratitude the assistance given in the preparation of this volume by Mr. J. N. Farquhar, one of the editors of the series to which it belongs. Were it not for the guidance that his wide knowledge of all aspects of Indian religion has afforded, the defects of this book would be still greater than they are. He has also by the pains he has taken in the correction of the proofs done much to bridge the wide interval that lies in this case between the author and the printer.

N. M.

POONA, INDIA.
October, 1914.

TO MARGARET

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

S.B.E. *Sacred Books of the East.*

J.R.A.S. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

E.R.E. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.*

R.V. *Ṛig Veda.*

A.V. *Atharva Veda.*

Śat. Brāh. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.*

Taitt. Saṃ. *Taittirīya Saṃhitā.*

Ait. Āraṇ. *Aitareya Āraṇyaka.*

Bṛihad. Up. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.*

Chānd. Up. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad.*

Śvet. Up. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad.*

Muṇḍ. Up. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad.*

Mbh. *Mahābhārata.*

Bhag. *Bhagavadgītā.*

Ved. Sūt. *Vedānta Sūtras.*

Hopkins, *R. I.* Hopkins, *Religions of India.*

Barth, *R. I.* Barth, *Religions of India.*

Ind. Ant. or *I. A.* *Indian Antiquary.*

Poussin, *Opinions.* Poussin, *Bouddhisme, Opinions sur l'Histoire de la Dogmatique.*

Suzuki. Suzuki, *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna.*

D. C. Sen. D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature.*

Westcott. Westcott, *Kabīr and the Kabīr Panth.*

Macauliffe. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion.*

Trumpp. Trumpp, *The Ādi Granth.*

INTRODUCTION

INDIA has always been recognized as so determinedly pantheistic in its religious thought that 'Indian Theism' will seem to many an unnatural collocation of words. There are some, no doubt, who will maintain that whatever can be so described is really foreign to the Indian spirit and must be credited to Christian or Muḥammadan influences. Were this the case the study of the course of the theistic development in India would lose much of its interest and value. A closer acquaintance with the facts will show, however, that Indian religion has had a far wider range of expression than is here suggested. The spirit of no people—certainly not that of the Indian races—can be summed up in a single formula. Theism, no doubt, assumes various aspects in various environments and as it passes through various minds. For that reason it will be found in India always to bear certain characteristic marks that determine it as Indian. But while that is the case it can hardly be denied that what can be definitely described as theistic is both ancient in the land and indigenous to the soil. It might indeed be maintained, were this the appropriate place to do so, that the common heart and conscience of mankind everywhere has in it the promise and potency of such a religious attitude. Without controversy, there are certain profound needs and longings of the heart which a faith in a personal God would seem alone to satisfy, while we are conscious at the same time of the fact that the demand of reason in us is steadily advancing simultaneously towards a conviction of the ground of the universe as one. We shall accordingly find at all periods of the Indian religious development certain elements in it which, far off as they often are from what we understand

by the Theism of Western theologians and philosophers, yet can justly claim to share with them that designation.

Those cults and systems, often embryonic, often fragmentary, appear sometimes as efforts of revolt from the ceremonialism or the intellectualism of the official religion. In such cases they have their roots in popular piety; and generally, when the wave of religious emotion has spent itself, they sink back to assume their place among a multitude of scarcely distinguishable sects. The fact that Indian Theism so often has this source renders the task of its historian particularly difficult. Piety seldom expresses itself in the literature and the language of the learned—and in early India practically the only literature that has survived is that which makes use of the learned language—and piety often attracts so little attention as to obtain no permanent recognition. It most often establishes itself in the hearts of the common people; and it may not infrequently be deepest where it is most inarticulate. In India especially, so barren in historical records, it is difficult to be sure of the character of some of those ancient movements of religious emotion or to estimate their influence. With the more intellectual Theism which has formulated itself in the systems of the philosophers it is easier to deal, though here too the setting of the ideas there expressed, the extent to which they lived in men's hearts and controlled their lives, remains obscure. As a matter of fact Theism, whether it springs from a root of simple piety or has reached self-consciousness in a formulated theology, always bears so close a relation to the lives of those who profess it that its value can only be rightly estimated by the help of its historical context. It is essentially a personal and experimental religion, and for that reason the obscurity of India's past renders the task of any one who seeks to trace the course of Indian Theism and to appreciate its influence a peculiarly difficult one. Even the main highway of the Indian religious development often loses itself in the wilderness. How much harder, therefore, it must be to endeavour to follow the innumerable bypaths, the jungle

tracks, of theistic devotion, now swallowed up in the dense undergrowth of polytheism, now lost in the pantheistic desert. We may be able to find in the obscure beginnings of a cult, now hopelessly idolatrous, in the suggestion of some ceremonial, or in a fragment of ancient song, traces of the claims that the heart once made to know God in a personal communion, demands of a living conscience in the face of formalism and insincerity. These will form the chief materials out of which the popular theistic faith will have to be reconstructed. The task of piecing together from a shadowy past such hints of what we are seeking is no easy one and gives room for much difference of opinion. It should not, however, be unprofitable, nor without its suggestions for a fuller comprehension of what Theism implies, to follow its wayward course as far as we are able to discern it and to note its reactions in the peculiar Indian environment.

It may indeed be questioned how far the name Theism is appropriate to describe some of the worships and some of the speculations which will come within our purview. It is true, as we shall find, that few, if any, of the popular cults are free from the taint of polytheism and idolatry. It is true also that in India especially it is difficult to demarcate the boundaries of Theism and Pantheism, to say that here one ends and the other begins. The unity of God and the reality of moral relations, the possibility of a fellowship between the Deity and his worshippers which never passes into unconscious absorption, man's freedom and his immortality, these we may believe to be essential to Theism and to follow inevitably from it. But at the same time we may have implicit Theisms, efforts of the spirit in its direction, which have not reached and may never reach full self-consciousness and yet to which the name need not be refused. We cannot decide by any *à priori* rule what should be admitted to our survey and what excluded from it. It will be possible for us, however, after the whole field, with whatever it has to present to us—whether we have to pronounce it good or bad, the product of the crude emotions of the half-

civilized or of a super-refined intellectual subtlety—has been surveyed, to judge of the value of India's efforts after a theistic faith in the light of such a fully articulated Theism as Christianity. Many of these efforts have proved, as we shall find, abortive. Something in the Indian atmosphere or in the Indian spirit seems again and again to thwart them. Why this is so we shall have to endeavour to explain; and it will be best explained by a comparison of the Indian theistic development in its waywardness and in its results with the fully ethical Theism of the Christian religion. Christianity provides the standard against which the products of Indian reflection and devotion can most suitably be measured.

The one limitation that it seems advisable to place upon our study is that it be confined as far as possible to phases of theistic religion which are genuinely Indian. Here again it will often be difficult to determine what to include and what to exclude. It is impossible to disentangle the foreign elements from those that are purely indigenous in many of the movements of Indian religious life. When Muḥammadanism invaded the country, and still more when Christianity appeared at a later date, supported by all the authority and prestige of Western civilization, the Indian spirit, however deeply rooted in its own soil, and however tenacious of its own peculiar characteristics, could not but be greatly influenced. And such influence tended naturally to strengthen the movement towards a definitely monotheistic Theism and to weaken whatever elements in it were peculiarly Indian. The more the religion has been thus de-Indianized, the more our interest in it diminishes; for it is with Indian Theism that we are here concerned. We shall accordingly exclude entirely from our study the theistic movements of the nineteenth century. Our purpose is to learn how far theistic worships have actually emerged in the past from the specifically Indian spirit and in what forms they have so emerged. We wish to know whether that spirit has any contribution to make to the interpretation of theistic religion, and especially what

points of contact it may have found in its past with the Christian religion, and whether means may be discovered for a fuller reconciliation between it and that supreme theistic faith. First in our treatment of the subject will come an account, mainly historical, of the successive efforts in the direction of Theism which mark the whole course of the development of Indian religion from the Vedic to the Muḥammadan period. This historical narrative will be followed by some account of the theology which, whether articulated into a system or only partially conscious of itself, lay behind the cultus and the experience. The record of the theistic facts will thus be succeeded by a survey of the theistic idea, the account of the manifold aspects of theistic life and faith by a presentation of the thought which was implicit in it and which endeavoured to explain it. Finally an attempt will be made to frame an appreciation of the value of this religious movement and its results by means of a comparison of it with the normative ethical Theism of Christianity.

PART I. HISTORY

I

THE THEISM OF THE *ṚIG VEDA*

WHEN one speaks of the Theism of the *Ṛig Veda*, it need hardly be explained that one uses the word with less than the full-orbed meaning that it bears for us to-day. There has been much controversy among scholars as to whether these poems are expressions of the religious consciousness of a primitive people, naïve utterances of the fears and hopes and fancies of the natural man, or whether they represent an advanced stage of civilization and embody the matured results of long reflection on the meaning of the world. But whichever of those views one inclines to, or whatever other conception one may form of the stage of culture of the Aryans of the Vedic age, it is obvious that the religion of which those hymns are the utterance cannot be described as strictly theistic or monotheistic in the sense in which to-day we understand those words. No single word, indeed, can represent the whole field of religious conjecture that finds expression within the limits of that collection. Theism we generally understand to connote at least three things: first, belief in God as a spiritual Being; second, the faith that His power is sufficient to secure that at the last the good will conquer; and third, a conception of the nexus that binds together God and His worshippers as mainly moral. But all this one does not expect to discover fully articulate in that early age. When one looks for Theism within the many-hued complexity of the dreams and fancies of those ancient poets it is not with the idea of finding more than an approximation,

in this direction and in that, to what the term has come to signify to the developed thought of modern times.

That the conceptions of a later day are necessarily higher than those of a primeval people need not be maintained; but they are likely to be more fully elaborated and more conscious of their implications. Religion has been defined in many and conflicting fashions, but one description of it embodies what is certainly a feature that is practically universal in all the various modes of its expression. It has been described as 'the highest form of man's consciousness of himself in his relation to all other things and beings.' If that be so, then when man views himself as one of a narrow kinship, when the tie of blood is the one bond of union in his society, it is impossible that he should reach the full theistic faith in a God who is the one guide and guardian of the whole race of men. The more limited his view of the social unity of which he is a member, the narrower will be his thought of God. The less we comprehend our own personality in the richness of its moral meaning, the less possible is it for us to climb from it to a right conjecture of the supreme Personality of which ours is but a pale reflection. Certainly knowing more of the world in which we live and of the race to which we belong than our Aryan ancestors, realizing as they could not the fibres and filaments that bind all races and all peoples in one wide human brotherhood, we by consequence know what we are better than they could, and therefore should have an ampler thought of God. In these and other ways it is a necessity of nature that any theistic conceptions that may have dawned upon the authors of those Hymns should be narrower and less fully moralized than those of the Theism of a later and a more fully instructed age. We should not look in the Vedic Hymns for that which it is in no wise possible we should find there, nor should we therefore blame them for its absence. Of religion, certainly it is true—whether or not it be true as well, as William James maintains, of philosophy—that 'it is more a matter of passionate vision than of logic', and it is

the vision of an unsophisticated age, the intuitions of seers to whom nature and the unseen world were alike near and vivid, that one looks for and finds in those ancient poems. Glimpses we can discern in them of a God rising out of nature and transcending it, sudden vistas, opening to them and perhaps as quickly closing, of a moral purpose and a moral order. Among the changing shapes of their conceptions we can discern here and there emerging the dim but imposing outlines of a full-orbed Theism. On one side, indeed, their thought seems to sink to the level of fetichism and the grossest superstition; on the other it loses itself in the arid wastes of pantheistic speculation. But midway between those opposite extremes can be traced forms of theistic devotion such as have never been altogether absent from that day to this from the religious reflection of India. If we piece together into one pattern these fragments of many-hued intuition we may be able to realize how near they approach to the theistic conceptions of to-day.

Among the many difficulties that face one in seeking to formulate the probable course of development of the Vedic theology a chief one is due to the absence of any reliable chronological data by means of which the order of the Hymns can be determined. It is happily unnecessary for our purpose to consider the vexed question of the date of their production. What is of importance for us is to conjecture which Hymns in the collection represent earlier ideas and which later and more fully developed ones. The Hymns of the *Ṛig Veda* range, it may be supposed, over a period of seven hundred or a thousand years of changing religious emotion and reflection. During that period the thoughts of men certainly did not stand still. But where can we find the key to the process of their movement and their growth? The Hymns stand for us against no background of experience and environment that we can do more than guess. Behind them there must have lain many things of which we can catch at most only now and then a glimpse—fetichism, ancestor-

worship, the dread of evil spirits, magical rites, philosophies, priesthoods, sacrifices. There were the periods when ritual prevailed ; there was the outgrowth of philosophical speculation ; there was the age of faith, of a keen, personal devotion, of love and longing for the face of God. Some parts of the cultus that prevailed within this period must have grown to great power and then decayed and died ; we can see new deities coming above the horizon to supplant the old ; ancient names take to themselves other and perhaps higher meanings. All those changes, corresponding to the ever changing and moving mind of man, we are left only to conjecture. Why Varuṇa for a time was great until he seems to fill up all the universe of the Vedic poet's thought, and why he passed speedily to be only the shadow of a mighty name; what the gods brought with them into India and what the new country and its indigenous conceptions contributed to their development; when the priest ruled and when the philosopher, and what gods each worshipped and with what rites—to these and many other questions we obtain no answer and can only grope after their solution with much uncertainty and debate. In consequence, the disentanglement of any one mode of thought, such as we conceive to be tending towards Theism, and the attempt to trace its development, can only be of the most tentative and doubtful character. Our main guides, apart from the contents of the Hymns themselves, must be the analogy of the course of evolution of other religions on the one hand, and the subsequent history of Indian thought on the other.

When one surveys the Vedic pantheon, seeking that in it which seems most akin to the theistic conceptions of a later age, there is one imposing figure that at once attracts our attention. Above all the other gods towers in moral grandeur the form of Varuṇa. And here at the same time is one among that throng of deities of whom we can claim that his worship dates from the very earliest Vedic period. The evidence seems too strong to be rejected that identifies this god of the

wide firmament and the open sky, of day and night over which he and Mitra share dominion, with Ahura-Mazda or Ormazd, the supreme god of Zoroastrianism.[1] So completely does Varuṇa dominate the scene when the Vedic worshipper turns his face towards him that it has been maintained that we have in him traces still surviving of a very ancient and pre-Vedic monotheism. It is not possible in view of the evidence of the Hymns themselves and in view of the analogy of other peoples to maintain this thesis, but it is possible to trace in the conception of this deity a movement of the minds of those ancient worshippers towards a Theism of a wonderfully lofty character. As we discern his figure, he seems to be in the act of passing beyond physical limitations to take his place as a moral lord over the consciences of men. But just when this is about to be accomplished his strength seems to pass from him. A god who, as has been said, in the period of his greatness stands by the side of even the loftiest of the Hellenic or Teutonic pantheon, 'like a Jewish prophet by the side of a priest of Dagon,'[2] falls from his high ethical eminence to be a mere ruler of the storms and tides. That this should have come to pass seems to us strange and unaccountable, and we can only guess the forces that dethroned him. Whatever these may have been, we can realize that that dethronement was an event in the spiritual history of India that was at once a symptom and a determinant of the long, succeeding process of its development. The 'Hebraic flavour' that was in Varuṇa was then definitely declared to be foreign to the Indian spirit, and since that day its indications have been rare.

Certainly there is much in the prayers and hymns to

[1] How far this view is strengthened by the discovery by Winckler at Boghaz-keui in Asia Minor of an inscription of the fourteenth century B. C. in which Varuṇa is named, is as yet doubtful. It may be 'merely a direct reference to Indian deities without having any immediate reference to Iran' (A. V. Williams Jackson in *E. R. E.* IV. 620). On the whole, however, it strengthens the case for the identification of Ahura-Mazda, that 'god of the Aryans' with Varuṇa.

[2] Bloomfield's *Religion of the Veda*, p. 232.

Varuṇa that brings back to one who knows it the lofty language of Hebrew seers and psalmists. He covereth himself with light as with a garment.[1] He stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain; he bears up the pillars of the earth.[2] 'Wise and mighty are the works of him who stemmed asunder the wide firmaments. He lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth.'[3] He hath opened a path for the sun; he knoweth the track of the birds through the air and of the ships across the seas, and there is nothing hid from his sight.[4] The designation Asura is applied especially to him, just as in the *Avesta* Ahura is the name of the supreme god; and other attributes of universal sovereignty are appropriated to him with an emphasis that sets him apart in this regard from all the other members of the Vedic pantheon. He is the great lord of the laws of nature, the upholder and controller of their order and their movement. He sitteth on his throne in the highest heaven[5] and beholds the children of men; his thousand spies go forth to the world's end and bring report of men's doings.[6] For with all those other tokens of pre-eminence he is especially a moral sovereign, and in his presence more than in that of any other Vedic god a sense of guilt awakens in his servants' hearts. His eyes behold and see the righteous and the wicked. 'The great guardian among the gods sees as if from anear. . . . If two sit together and scheme, king Varuṇa is there as the third and knows it. . . . Whoso should flee beyond the heavens far away would yet not be free from king Varuṇa. From the sky his spies come hither: with a thousand eyes they do watch over the earth. All this king Varuṇa does behold—what is between the two firmaments, what beyond. Numbered of him are the winkings of men's eyes.'[7]

[1] *R. V.* VIII. 41. 10.
[2] *R. V.* VIII. 42. 1.
[3] *R. V.* VII. 86. 1.
[4] *R. V.* I. 25.
[5] *R. V.* V. 67. 1, 2.
[6] *R. V.* VII. 61. 3.
[7] *A. V.* IV. 16. The fact that this is a hymn included in the *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* does not prove that the portion quoted above, which bears

In another hymn there is a still more vivid testimony to the moral greatness of this god, as the searcher of his servants' hearts, the father of their spirits. Here the psalmist believes himself to have been, on account of some sin that he has committed, forsaken of his god. He sadly calls to mind the former days of their communion, the time when gliding over the waters with the lord of the waters he received the sacred call to be a *ṛiṣi*. In those days of fellowship there was on land and sea a light that now was absent. 'What hath become', he asks, 'of those our ancient friendships when without enmity we walked together? . . . If he thy true ally hath sinned against thee, still, Varuṇa, he is the friend thou lovedst.'[1]

Here we have what seems to be the closest approximation that we can find in all the ancient worships of India to a real ethical Theism. It appears as if a religion of nature were discovered in the very process of passing beyond those limits to become a religion of spirit. When it has been realized that even the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, it is natural and inevitable to turn inward and to seek Him in the movements of the heart and the monitions of the conscience. This transition seems in the act of being accomplished in the thoughts of the poets who worship and celebrate the greatness of Varuṇa. Fear is passing into reverence, wonder into love. The upholder of the natural order becomes to them by an instinctive logic the upholder of the order of righteousness and truth. 'Far from us, far away drive thou destruction. Put from us e'en the sin we have committed. Whither by day depart the constellations that shine at night, set high in heaven above us? Varuṇa's holy laws remain unweakened, and through the night the moon moves on in splendour.'[2] Is not

all the evidence of antiquity, is late. 'One may surmise', says von Roth, 'in this case as well as in the case of many other parts of this Veda, that fragments of older hymns have been utilized to deck out charms for sorcery.' (Quoted in *S. B. E.* XLII, p. 389.)

[1] *R. V.* VII. 88. 5, 6.

[2] *R. V.* I. 24. 9, 10.

the intuition of this ancient psalmist groping after the thought of Wordsworth's invocation to Duty?

> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

Varuṇa's ordinances are fixed and sure so that even the immortal gods cannot oppose them. He places his fetters upon the sinner; his is the power to bind and the power also to release and he forgives sins even unto the second generation.[1] 'There is in fact', says Professor Macdonell,[2] 'no hymn to Varuṇa (and the Ādityas) in which the prayer for forgiveness does not occur, as in the hymns to other deities the prayer for worldly goods.' It is this ethical aspect of Varuṇa's character more even than his attainment of a position closely approximating to monotheism that stamps his cultus as definitely theistic. The worship of a deity whose exaltation, though it be to less than sole sovereignty, is recognized as a moral preeminence is, we conjecture, of a higher type than a mere unethical monotheism, laying greater stress on the divine solitude than on the divine character. Perhaps the most significant fact of all in regard to this Vedic deity is the connexion of the doctrine of *ṛita* or the moral order with his name and his authority. In this again we have a close correspondence between Varuṇa and the 'wise lord' of the *Avesta*, both being designated as the 'spring of the *ṛita* or righteousness'. In the Vedic system it is Varuṇa beyond all others who keeps beneath his guardianship the cosmic and the moral order.

> Howe'er we who thy people are,
> O Varuṇa, thou shining god,
> Thy *ṛita* injure day by day,
> Yet give us over nor to death,
> Nor to the blow of angry foe.[3]

[1] *R. V.* I. 24. 25; VII. 84. 86.
[2] Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology*, p. 27.
[3] *R. V.* I. 25. 1, 2 (Hopkins's translation).

'Varuṇa', says Professor Bloomfield,[1] 'is the real trustee of the *ṛita*. When god Agni struggles towards the *ṛita* he is said in a remarkable passage to become for the time being god Varuṇa.'

How it came about that this god was deposed from his high eminence and the victorious progress in India of an ethical Theism brought to a sudden close one has not the materials even to conjecture. In the last book of the *Ṛig Veda* there is no hymn to Varuṇa, for by that time monotheism had definitely given place in the development of Indian religion to pantheism, and there is no longer room for this stern and righteous god. We obtain glimpses in several hymns of the struggle by which this is accomplished and Indra takes his place. He seems still to be recognized in some of his former greatness but it is as 'magni nominis umbra', and his place in worship is usurped by a god nearer to the comprehension of the common man and appealing more to his crude instincts. If one were to venture to compare this stage in the progress of Vedic religion with that of the ancient Hebrews one might find a parallel between the forsaking of Varuṇa for Indra and the tendency of the people in Israel, against which their prophets were ever warning them, to forsake Jehovah for Baal. One can see how, in abandoning what we may call the main highway of Theism for a devious path, they were advancing towards scepticism, and as a result, in the case of the higher minds who could not rest satisfied in so grossly anthropomorphic a deity as Indra, towards the replacement of faith in a living God by theosophic speculations that could dispense with him altogether. It may well be that when we hear the poet say 'I bid farewell to the great God, the Father . . . I leave the Father, for my choice is Indra',[2] we are present at one of the great turning-points in India's spiritual history. Whether this be the case or not, certainly one may be permitted to reflect on the strange difference that emerged in

[1] Bloomfield's *Religion of the Veda*, p. 128.
[2] *R.V.* X. 124. 3, 4.

the religious conceptions of the two Aryan peoples after they had separated and descended, the one to the plains of Iran the other to those of India. The one becomes ethical, optimistic, distinctly unphilosophical; the other monistic, pessimistic, persistently speculative. Why should theistic conceptions, after they had entered India, no longer have had the power over one family of that stock that they had had before, and that they continued to have over another? Can we attribute it in part to the closer national unity, reflecting itself in a more unifying thought of God, that may have been possible in the high trans-Himalayan plains but that may have disappeared as the invaders scattered over the wide and fertile land of Hindostan? Or was there in the very configuration of their new home with its monotonous expanses and its distant horizons, or perhaps in the nature of the people that they conquered there, something that supplied the new impulse and gave their thoughts the new direction? We cannot tell. Certainly from this time onward the pantheistic leaven is never altogether absent from the religious mood of India, and no other occupies in all her later history the moral eminence that in that early dawn Varuṇa had held.

When we turn aside from this great figure, that so dominates, as it appears, the earliest Vedic period, to mark the trend of the religious development apart from him, certain characteristics of the whole movement of thought, as the Hymns reveal it, may be noted, hindering a definitely theistic advance and rendering sporadic tendencies in that direction comparatively ineffective. One of these, and perhaps the most important of all in determining the ultimate result from the travail of the thought of those ancient seers, is an inability to be entirely whole-hearted in their anthropomorphism. What Professor Bloomfield calls 'arrested personification'[1] is, as he says, 'the very genius' of the religion of the *Ṛig Veda*. We realize this when we contrast its gods with those of Greece. To the artistic and thoroughly human and earthly imagination

[1] *Religion of the Veda*, p. 85.

of the Greek it was an easy matter to envisage in the most familiar forms their conceptions of their gods. The gods walked with them and fought with them and joined in their follies and their sins. The essentially worldly Hellenic spirit was not revolted by those associations; neither their instinct of awe nor their religious or moral sense was sufficiently strongly developed to resent this. Their vivid imaginations demanded definiteness of outline and symmetry of form. The mind of India is at the opposite pole from this, and 'in the very first words she utters we find her aspiring after the vague and the mysterious'. There is no demand here for definiteness of outline, none of the Greek desire for symmetry. The wild forces of nature persist in bursting through the bounds of their partial personification. Even Indra, who is more fully humanized than most, 'crashes down from heaven in thunder' and 'is born of waters and cloud'; while Savitṛi in his golden chariot is still the glowing Sun shining in 'the dark-blue sky'. In no case is the process of anthropomorphization anything like complete. What an artistic imagination accomplished in the case of the Greeks, a strong moral sense accomplished in a higher fashion for the Hebrews. It would be foolish to apportion praise or blame among the peoples for the process of the development of their religious or other ideas, when we cannot estimate the value of the forces that determined such processes, but we can see how in one instance a keen moral sense, in another a vivid imagination, and in a third a more purely intellectual cast of mind determined largely the result. In the case of Varuṇa the marked moralization of the conception of the god helps to an exceptional degree towards a more complete realization of his personality. We may not be able to accept Oldenberg's suggestion that this god was borrowed from the Semites, while admitting a closer resemblance in his case than in that of other Vedic deities to the Semitic method of anthropomorphization.[1] This method is often censured and the tendency

[1] It is at least interesting to note that, if there was indeed any debt on

rightly condemned to attribute too many human characteristics to God. But without dogmatism one may suggest that, even in conjecturing so high a matter as the divine nature, truth may be reached by this method if it is carried onward from lower forms of thought to higher. Greek religion may have stopped short too soon, satisfied with an artistic product, but the Hebrew seers with their strong ethical instincts were able to pass beyond a physical to a psychical anthropomorphism and to reach by that road a region in which the word need retain no suggestion of reproach. Reason and love, because they are found in man, are not therefore limited to man; and an anthropomorphism realized in those terms has reached the highest form of theistic belief.

Such, however, is not the mode of development which we find in the religious conceptions of the *Ṛig Veda*. There is neither the Greek desire for order which resulted in the formation of the pantheon of Olympus, nor the recognition of a definite moral system which must in time discover itself as irreconcilable with a multiplicity of gods. The place of Varuṇa is usurped by nature powers, unmoral and with undefined jurisdictions, melting from time to time into each other, and, because unethical, more controllable to its ends by the rising power of the speculative intellect. *Ṛita* in the same manner is replaced by the vaguer outlines of an idea into which the gods in all their popular crudeness can be absorbed and anon discharged again at will to take up once more their functions. A moral unity, even a political unity such as that of the Greeks, imports a principle of order into the divided house of polytheism, and in such a case the process of increasing definition and of system can be clearly traced. But the end towards which the evolution of the Vedic deities

the part of Varuṇa or Ahura Mazda to the Semites, that debt was repaid later. M. Cumont points out that 'without doubt' at the period of the Achaemenides a 'rapprochement' took place between the Semitic Baalsamin and 'the Persian Ahura Mazda, the ancient deity of the vault of heaven but now become the supreme physical and moral power'. (Cumont, *Les Religions orientales dans le Paganisme romain*, p. 154.)

already pointed was 'a Pantheism which was an acosmism', 'a gulf in which all difference was lost'. There is a much more energetic opposition between a god who is simply an embodied force of nature and man's moral sense than there is between such a being and his merely intellectual conceptions; and the reaction of the one upon the other is much more active in the former case than in the latter. For that reason we find that in India a continuous and deepening process of reflection leaves the Vedic deities largely unaffected. Only certain hints and suggestions indicate the conspiracy that all the time is proceeding against their rude energy and their authority.

It is not our part here to enumerate those signs of that pantheistic activity of thought which, perhaps from the very earliest times, was at work, undermining the Vedic polytheism. There are 'secret names', mysteries in theology that are not to be uttered; there is the increasing significance of the sacrifice, until its power displaces that of the god to whom it is offered; there is the growing prominence of the Sun in its aspect as Savitṛi, the quickener of life, 'the soul of the universe'. These are sign-posts on the way to the Pantheism which was to discover itself fully to a later age. It is in other directions that we must look for the working of the more properly theistic instinct. We find it in a significant characteristic of the theology of the Hymns, which Max Müller has called henotheism or kathenotheism, i.e. 'the belief in individual gods alternately regarded as the highest.' This certainly is due in a considerable measure to a natural human impulse to unify differences. In each particular case it is not easy to determine whether as a matter of fact the unity is monistic or monotheistic. If speculation is its main motive, then it is likely to be a unity of the former kind that is sought, if a spirit of devotion, then the latter. It is not possible for us to distinguish how far the latter spirit prevails over the former, and how far therefore in any particular case this henotheistic tendency is moving towards pure Theism rather

than towards Pantheism. Beside the influence of speculation, eviscerating and emasculating the strong gods of a simpler faith, there is ritualism and mere indifference rendering service of the gods perfunctory and the discrimination of one from another careless and inaccurate. This too, no doubt, is one of the causes of that melting of one god into another which henotheism connotes. It is sometimes, as Professor Bloomfield affirms,[1] simply 'polytheism grown cold in service and unnice in its distinctions, leading to an opportunist monotheism in which every god takes hold of the sceptre and none keeps it'. With all these reservations, however, one cannot doubt that in certain cases what is called henotheism is due not merely to such blurring of outline as speculation or indifference produces, but rather to the worshipper's vivid realization of the presence and the personality of one particular deity to whom he bows his heart. It is not so much that he loves others less but that he loves this one more. The road of devout adoration is the true road to Theism; and worship and self-surrender, the more intense the emotion they express, tend the more to lift their object beyond all limitations and make it for the time at least the one and only real. Mr. Dilger[2] has admirably illustrated this attitude by the saying of Luther that the dearest of all his children to him was the one that happened to be at that moment on his knee. We see it in all periods of the history of Hinduism and of other religions as well. When the Marāṭha poet of a later age extols Viṭhoba, or when at an early stage of the religion of Israel Jehovah is exalted, the worshipper is not by any means fully aware of the implications of his implicit Theism and does not in set terms deny the existence of other gods. But for him this one before whom he bows fills up his whole horizon. That there are approximations at least in the *Ṛig Veda* to this type of unconscious Theism one cannot doubt.

[1] *Religion of the Veda*, p. 199.
[2] *Salvation in Hinduism and Christianity*, p. 80.

Of the henotheism that is farthest removed from Theism—what Hopkins[1] prefers to call 'polytheistic pantheism'—an example is the designation of Aditi as 'all the gods and men',[2] while the ceremonial activity of the priests is expressly indicated, in tacit contrast with the speculations of the philosophers, as 'making into many the (sun) bird that is but one', and as 'calling the one by many names, Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan'.[3] It would seem as if one group of gods proved malleable material in the hands of the philosophers, being easily beaten out thin into their speculations, while another group proved more stubborn and retained more successfully their individuality. Of the former are Sūrya and Savitṛi and Agni, the altar fire; of the latter Varuṇa in especial, and also Mitra, Indra, Viṣṇu. It is not necessary to speak further of Varuṇa, but, if it be the case that he is identical with Ahura-Mazda, he is not the only member of the Vedic pantheon that retains to a later age his theistic eminence. Indra continued to be *par excellence* the popular god of the conquering Aryans and remained an object of worship even to Puranic days. Mitra also, though in the Vedic poems he is Varuṇa's shadow, almost merged in the greater name, was destined at a far later date to gather into his person the strongest forces of paganism in a conflict with Christianity all the fiercer because of the close affinity in certain respects of the theistic systems that were there brought face to face. Viṣṇu like Mitra has not in the Vedic age the same high place that was later to be his, when his name came more than any other in India to represent the conception of a personal god in the face of the opposing pantheistic tendencies. What it may have been that gave certain members of the pantheon a more stubborn personality than others we cannot now perceive, but in the dominance claimed now for one and again for another, and further in the combination of them into pairs that seem sometimes to have only one personality between them, we

[1] *Religions of India*, p. 149. [2] *R. V.* I. 89.
[3] *R. V.* I. 164.

see inchoate efforts to turn the chaos of polytheism into a cosmos. No definite hierarchy of gods is evolved such as was evolved by the orderly and artistic genius of the Greeks. The why of these things we can only half perceive, and ultimate causes are beyond our ken. Perhaps the most we can say is, with Barth,[1] that 'India is radically pantheistic and that from its cradle onward'. However this may be, the pale power of thought ultimately triumphed over the claims of heart and conscience, and the abstractions of Upaniṣad philosophers took the place of the fervour and the glow of Vedic psalmists.

That some movement of this kind was inevitable and was due to the very necessities of thought itself has of course to be admitted. The naïve beliefs of natural religion, the blended fancies and fears and deeper intuitions that at first form the unregulated expression of the religious life have to be, by the help of the reason, elucidated and evolved. But that this evolution must end in the substitution for a living and personal God of a bloodless abstraction does not follow. Philosophy is not the enemy but the interpreter of life, and therefore it is not the enemy of worship and devotion. It may be maintained that we see in India a one-sided and so a false philosophical development; and the reason of that one-sidedness may be traced in the fact that speculation was apparently largely the work of the priests, who at that stage of religious culture were very probably in India, as they have so often proved themselves everywhere, the worst enemies of the religious life and the least responsive to its movements. In the corresponding Greek philosophical and religious development such men as Xenophanes and Heraclitus, who sought a principle of unity beneath differences, correspond to the unnamed speculative thinkers of India. But India seems to have lacked a Socrates to remind her that neither breath nor fire nor *kāma* (desire) is a principle sufficient to explain a universe which contains not only things and thoughts but moral ends and

[1] *Religions of India*, p. 8.

purposes and hopes. The priest-philosophers following the path of negation and seeking that which by its very abstractness might embrace or underlie all things, suggest Agni, at once a mysterious creative force, to satisfy the needs of speculation, and the flame of the sacrifice, to justify the maintenance of the ritual. Or they devise Bṛihaspati, precursor of a still more abstract Brahman, a god closely linked with Agni as embodying the prayer of the priest and at the same time a quasi-spiritual essence into which reflection may labour to dissolve the universe. To the last there seems to persist the struggle of life to vindicate its claims against a negative metaphysic, though by this time the struggle has lost much of its early vigour. Tvaṣṭṛi is not much more than a shadow or a makeshift when he appears in the rôle of creator. Finally we seem to see the belief in a personal God, as it retreats before the forces of Pantheism, disappearing in the worship of Prajāpati in the direction of agnosticism. The great hymn to this deity, which may be said to close the period that the *Ṛig Veda* covers, has been described by Max Müller as addressed to 'The Unknown God', and later the interrogative *ka* 'who?' was adopted as his name. We have here one of the final efforts of the theistic instinct to mould cosmological speculation into the form of a being to be worshipped. But the stuff is too stubborn for the religious consciousness; it cannot mould it near enough to the heart's desire. When it travels by this road, the *via negativa*, Theism can only end in agnosticism. It needs another guide than the logical understanding and another path to tread than the way of abstraction.

One cannot pause and look back over the course of the development of the Vedic Theology, as we have attempted to trace it, without feeling how insecure and tentative must be one's conjecture in such a field of inquiry. The Hymns in all their movement and their colour and with their varying outlook, that occupies every attitude from naïve nature-worship to the completest scepticism, stand for us to-day in no environment

that helps us to arrange them in their sequence or to read with any assurance the thoughts that stirred their unknown authors. We can only guess from the development elsewhere of the human mind at the course that here it followed from the scarcely discerned morning twilight through the splendour of the gods of the sky and the wide spaces until the evening of reflection casts its shadow over all. The march of this development seems for a time to move towards a living personal Lord in whose fellowship his worshippers shall find the cleansing of their hearts. But across this path of promise there falls the shadow of a too arid intellectualism, and its progress is stayed and diverted to another end. The great figure of Varuṇa, however, remains, far off and isolated as it is on the bank and shoal of time, testifying to the theistic capacity of the Indo-Aryan race.

II

THEISTIC ELEMENTS IN THE POPULAR RELIGION IN THE PERIOD OF THE BRĀHMAṆAS AND THE UPANIṢADS

WHEN we pass from the *Ṛig Veda* and the religion of which it is the expression, we seem to have entered upon a new region and to breathe a new atmosphere. The change indeed from the surroundings that helped to inspire the Hymns to those in which the Brāhmaṇas may be supposed to have taken shape well represents the difference we are conscious of between the spirit of the earlier worship and the later. Instead of the bracing air of the mountain passes we have the heavy, torpid climate of the plains. A single rapid river of thought and aspiration, flowing keen and wholesome through the hills, gives place to many sluggish streams finding their diverse ways across the level, sometimes losing themselves wholly in the sands. One must beware indeed of attaching exaggerated importance to the influence of climate on the thoughts of men. There is melancholy and worldliness and sloth of spirit among mountaineers as well as among dwellers in the plains. Changes of temperature and of environment go but a little way to explain the secrets that are locked fast within the human personality. But certainly the contrast is vivid between the rapid, glittering stream of early Vedic thought and the meandering, wayward course, so difficult to trace in its continuity, that is followed across the plains of India by the religious fears and hopes of the people of a later age. The change and the greater complexity and obscurity of the religious facts which accompany it make it still more difficult to estimate the strength and the character of theistic belief during this

period. It can indeed only be called theistic belief on the ground that it is on the way towards what may prove a genuine Theism. But there is still a very long road to travel to that goal, and much polytheism and idolatry and gross superstition to be sloughed ere that name can be claimed for it. What we are looking for is the promise and potency of such a result in the midst of the prevailing Pantheism, broken lights, however dim, in the deep and general darkness.

In the earlier literature we could not be mistaken in discerning among the aspirations to which the Hymns give utterance some that are to a more or less degree theistic in their tendency. Now, however, our task becomes harder, as our materials become more obscure. We may indeed be confident that no period in Indian religious history was without some elements at least of what we mean by Theism. But these may be mingled with much that seems little enough compatible with them. It has always, we must remember, been found possible everywhere to hold together at one period thoughts which later reflection discovers to be contradictory, and it is generally alleged of Indian thinking that it has peculiar capacity in this respect. There are, however, two things, one or other of which must be present in any religion if it is at all theistic, and which in their combination exhibit what is at least on the way towards a real ethical Theism. There is, on the one hand, the realization in some measure that true worship must be inward, issuing from the heart and affecting the conduct; while, on the other hand, there is the elevation of the deity to something approaching to sole authority. The ethical monotheism which results from the union in a single religion of both those conceptions will seldom, indeed, be found in anything like completeness in the history of Indian thought, but even when that is far from being realized, one or other of its constituent elements may be present in greater or less degree. In proportion, for example, as a religion approximates to Pantheism, it generally—as we shall find in the case of the religion of the Upaniṣads—tends to

empty itself of its ethical content and for that reason, while it may remain theistic, to fall short of being a real ethical Theism. On the other hand one finds in India, as one finds also in Israel, faiths that are decidedly spiritual in character, while at the same time they recognize the existence of other gods than that of their own particular worship. Sincere devotion has generally in it, we may claim, some theistic element, for it comes from the heart and moves the will, and it also in the measure of its intensity takes account only of the one god invoked and ignores all others. It is by means of such criteria as these that we must test the various expressions of their wayward religious instincts that we can trace through the dim centuries that succeed the period which the Hymns of the *Ṛig Veda* serve so brilliantly to illuminate.

When we turn aside from the *Ṛig* to the *Atharvan*—in which indeed we can find but little that has any bearing on our theme—great as is the change from the clear, wholesome air we have hitherto been breathing to its mephitic vapours, we must not too hastily assume that we have passed to a later and a more sophisticated age. The two collections cannot be held to represent successive stages of a continuous religious development. It is unquestionably true that the hymns of the *Atharva Veda* date as a literary collection from a period considerably later than those of the *Ṛig*; but there can be little doubt that the fetichism and demonology with which the *Atharvan* is mainly occupied is earlier in its origin than the other more elevated worship, that it ran parallel to it and that it outlived it.

One must, no doubt, use much caution in applying a parallel from the religious history of one race to that of another, but the course of religious development in Greece may well have had elements of similarity to that which we find in India. We know now that there were theologians and there were worshippers in Greece before Homer, and that his poems do not give a complete or adequate picture of the religion of the whole of the Greek people. There were Pelasgian and non-

Hellenic elements in their worship of which we catch few glimpses in his poems, and there was what is called Chthonic ritual and reverence paid to heroes of the earth and of the under-world, as well as the worship paid to the Olympians. So it certainly was also in India. How far the worship of Vedic or Homeric sky-gods can be distinguished as aristocratic from a more popular fetichism or demonolatry, or how far, on the other hand, it is the worship of a higher Aryan people, and how far, accordingly, a racial distinction can be made between its followers and those who worshipped other gods, it is not possible to determine with any certainty. As a matter of fact we cannot classify religious instincts in any such way. To describe the fears and superstitions that the *Atharvan* discloses as confined to the lower classes and to suppose that they did not equally disturb the higher strata of society is to show ignorance of human nature. And we have no reason either to suppose that any single race was ever altogether free from the dread of dark powers or was ever without those who betook themselves to such devices for deliverance from them as we find in the *Atharva Veda.* It is the interaction of so many religious influences, varied as the varieties of human nature and human need, and further complicated by the intermixture of alien races, that makes it difficult to trace with any confidence the course of Indian religious development during this period. Documents there are, but their dates are uncertain, and how far they really correspond to the facts of popular belief and practice, or how far they do little more than present us with an ideal system fashioned by the priests, that effectually conceals the real movements of religious life behind it, it is hardly possible to determine. Amid all the uncertainties and obscurities into which we plunge when we leave the collections of the Hymns behind us, we most gladly welcome any guidance that may be furnished us by the study of comparative religion, insecure and highly subjective as its suggestions often must be.

The first great body of literary material that presents itself

as we leave the various collections of Vedic Hymns behind us is the Brāhmaṇas, in regard to which, in the form in which they have come to us, there can be no doubt of their aristocratic character. They are aristocratic, because they are so completely the work of the priesthood, and a priesthood that seems altogether de-spiritualized and absorbed only in its gains. Naturally, therefore, their thoughts are mainly of the rich and of the powerful, and but seldom of the common people. In consequence the traces of real theistic aspiration which these books disclose are few and faint. Everywhere there is the priest and the altar and the sacrifice, the priest measuring with painful detail the great altar's height and breadth, but giving no hint of the desires that filled the hearts of the worshippers. As it is expressed in their priestly language, the bricks of the altar that alone are worthy to be consecrated with special prayers are the nobles; for the common people, who do no more than 'fill the spaces' between brick and brick, there is only a common prayer.[1] All the same we know that each one of all that undistinguished multitude had a heart and a need of God that must have sought a satisfaction elsewhere than from this proud and exclusive hierarchy. The priesthood and the sacrificial system must have rested on some basis of faith, else it would not have long endured. We can dimly trace throughout the Brāhmaṇas indications that behind the screen of formalism and of ceremonial there was at work a two-fold process of religious growth, the fruits of which were to declare themselves at a later period. On the one hand there was the beginning of the more intellectual development from which sprang the Upaniṣads; on the other there are hints of the presence of that devout spirit, which, more emotional and popular than reflective, expressed itself mainly in poetry and legend, and of which some account is furnished at a later date in certain sections of the *Mahābhārata*. It is the second of these two processes of development which it falls to us at present to endeavour to

[1] *Śat. Brāh.* VI. 1. 2. 25.

trace in so far as it can be separated from the other and not necessarily hostile movement.

Apparently even at this early period the name of Viṣṇu had begun to be associated with theistic devotion, as opposed to cults more pantheistic and appealing less directly to the heart. It is no easy matter to discern through the obscurity of that early age the causes which set this deity apart for this particular rôle and elevated him to the place of eminence which he comes to occupy. Some hints there are, however, of the progress that he was apparently making all this time, behind the screen of Brāhmanic ritual, to the position he has held so long as the supreme god of those in India whose hearts are filled with *bhakti* or 'loving faith'. The legendary account of the process by which this result was achieved is given in the Brāhmaṇas in the form of a story of the performance of a *sattra* or great sacrifice by the gods and of the way in which, in connexion with it, Viṣṇu obtained pre-eminence among them all. Apart from this tale, which gives no clue to the real reasons why he and not any other was so singled out, there appear from these books to have been certain associations with the name of Viṣṇu which may be of some significance in this connexion. Abstract investigation as to the primal cause of things cannot be said to be a spring of religious devotion, and we do not find such speculations gathering round this name; but, on the other hand, the sacrifice may well be the utterance of a deep desire for fellowship with God. When, therefore, we find that in the Brāhmaṇas Viṣṇu is said to be the sacrifice, we can guess that he is already on his way to his place as the god of the worship of men's hearts. Again, it is noticeable that, when any error is committed in the sacrificial ritual, it is Viṣṇu who is to be invoked, as though already he was recognized in his aspect of grace as a saviour. Perhaps also we may discern associations with that power to touch the heart, that a religion of devotion demands, gathering about his name in the legend that represents him as the means by which, when all the other gods were helpless, the earth was redeemed

from the power of the Asuras, now no longer gods but demons. Remarkable, too, and suggestive of ideas which we can hardly conceive as already dawning on men's minds, is the fact that it is Viṣṇu, the dwarf, that accomplishes this deliverance, as though out of weakness issued strength and safety. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points further to the important part that this one of the gods plays in the ritual of domestic life, a ritual that we may be confident has come down from a very ancient period. This is seen, for example, in the important place that Viṣṇu holds in the marriage ceremonial. Always, however, from early Vedic times that which more than any other thing the name of this god suggests is the legend of the three mighty steps with which he traversed earth, the atmosphere, and the highest heaven. In this third region, in the bright realm of light 'where even birds dare not fly', he dwells[1] inscrutable. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar is of opinion that the obscurity surrounding that third step helped especially to give him an association of mystery such as is necessary for a God that is to be acknowledged as sole and supreme. Probably also its association with the world of the dead who journeyed by the way of the gods to that region of blessedness may have connected Viṣṇu, as every god who is to obtain a power over human hearts must be connected, with the hopes and fears of an immortal life.[2]

Certainly a study of comparative religion seems to indicate that to sun-gods—and to that class no one doubts that Viṣṇu belonged—are attributed to a greater extent than to any other deities those qualities which attract the personal devotion of their worshippers, and that they pre-eminently have everywhere become centres of hope and comfort in a world of shadows. Max Müller in one of his speculations as to the origins of religion speaks of certain animals as possessing 'a theogonic capacity'. We may with more confidence affirm

[1] *R. V.* I. 155. 5.

[2] The Fathers even appear, according to one interpreter, to be described in a passage of the *Rig Veda* as 'the descendants' of Viṣṇu (*R. V.* X. 15. 3-18, Hopkins's translation, *R. I.*, p. 144).

that certain gods possess in a greater degree than others this capacity, in the sense that they are able to become in an eminent degree media of the hope of eternal life—that it is possible for them to be recognized as gods of love and of consolation in a way which does not seem to be possible for others. Comparative religion distinguishes two classes of gods as endowed in this respect with the power to kindle hope and inspire devotion. There are, on the one hand, gods of spring and vegetation deities, whose mythology and the facts in nature to which it corresponds suggest death and resurrection. Of this class were Dionysus and Demeter in Greece, Attis in Phrygia, and probably also Kṛṣṇa in India. The other class of gods possessing this capacity are, as has been indicated, sun-gods and light-gods, such as—to some extent at least—the Egyptian Osiris,[1] the Persian Mithra, and the Indian Viṣṇu. It may even be that the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, later recognized in all His moral majesty as 'God of truth and without iniquity', as 'the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings', would also be found, if we were able to trace its history all the way to its dim origin, to have been at first the name of a solar deity.[2] So also Bhagavān, whose name is so constantly employed in later days by adherents of the school of *bhakti* to describe the supreme god of their devotion, traces his descent from the ancient sun-god Bhaga, one of the Ādityas. It may seem strange that the claim should be made on behalf of Buddha that he has any affinity with solar deities or that the religion that he preached is akin to the theistic worships that gather round such names as those of Viṣṇu and of Bhagavān. But as a matter of fact both these statements are well grounded.

[1] It would appear that this god combined in his person elements of both a solar deity and a corn spirit.

[2] He has been identified by some scholars with the sun-god Shamash, while the 'Babylonists' 'emphasize the astral or lunar character of the Jahveh of early (or of pre-Mosaic) Israel' (*Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 86. Cf. also p. 51). See also Jastrow's *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 72 f.

M. Senart has fully demonstrated that there are elements of the Buddha legend that prove its partial derivation from solar cults. Such are for example the marks on his body and the story of his conflict with Māra, a conflict that is in many respects reminiscent of ancient myths that describe the struggle between light and darkness. Such characteristics as these are found associated with theistic worships, and especially with that of Viṣṇu, and it will be found when we come to consider Buddhism in more detail that, in spite of its avowed atheism, in many respects it has a strong affinity with Theism.

It is easy indeed to perceive how the daily re-birth of light out of darkness would present itself to men shadowed by fear and death as a very parable of hope, and how the source of that illumination would itself be viewed as a place of refuge in abiding light beyond the shadows of the earth. There can be little doubt—though, when the doctrine of transmigration obtained, as it did at a later date, its amazing power over the Indian mind, the fact was somewhat obscured—that the secret of Viṣṇu's early eminence and of the grasp he has laid upon the heart of India consisted mainly in the hope that he brought to a world weary of death of an immortal life beyond the grave. The fear of death and of repeated death is one of the most marked characteristics of the Brāhmaṇas. The knowledge of the mystery that 'spring comes into life again out of the winter'—a mystery which only the sun-gods and the vegetation-gods control—brings with it the reward of victory over this enemy.[1] The sun is the gate of the path leading to the gods[2] and the third step of Viṣṇu signifies the goal of the heavenly world, the 'safe refuge' whither the worshipper hopes to pass from the lower regions of repeated death.[3] As a later thinker expresses it, 'He who has understanding for his charioteer, and who holds the reins of the mind—he reaches the end of his journey, and that is the highest place of Viṣṇu.'[4]

[1] *Śat. Brāh.* I. 5. 3. 14.
[2] *Mbh.* XIII. 1082.
[3] *Śat. Brāh.* I. 9. 3. 10.
[4] *Kaṭha Up.* I. 3. 9.

While all these circumstances may well have helped to give to Viṣṇu the place of eminence to which he attained, there is also the significant fact that he was connected from the earliest Vedic times with a work of deliverance for mankind in distress.[1] It is not the majesty or the exaltation of a god that gives him power to control the hearts of men; it is rather his condescension. It is perhaps because he differed in this respect from Varuṇa that it was to Viṣṇu that the power was finally transferred which Varuṇa lost. The grace of Varuṇa to the sinner is only a vague affirmation, a hope, a conjecture; while Viṣṇu, according to the legend, had once by a definite work of deliverance, manifested his willingness, as well as his power, to help men in their extremity. If it be characteristic of Theism that it binds together the temporal and the eternal and that it binds them in an ethical relationship, then we may not be wrong in detecting in this ancient and enduring legend one reason for the association of this god with theistic aspiration. Other gods who had entered less energetically or less graciously into personal relations with men could be more easily made use of as media for a religion which was a mere view of the world, as labels for a speculative system. Similarly the early philosophers of Greece passed by the Olympians and called to the aid of their speculations the vaguer potencies of a more primitive religion. Viṣṇu was too highly personalized a deity to be altogether adaptable to the uses of Indian metaphysicians. This god of a semi-historical redemption was more naturally fitted to be the centre round which could gather the worship of the simple and the devout. This, combined with the fact that he was a sun-god with a sun-god's association of light and life and blessedness, may well be what raised him to the position that through all later time he holds as the deity *par excellence* of Indian Theism. Similarly Prometheus is nowadays believed to have been originally a sun-god—one among several of the Greek Ādityas—but he, too, is more

[1] *R. V.* VI. 49. 13.

than that. The place he holds in Greek religion and Greek poetry was due to the legend that he brought fire to men and saved them, even as Viṣṇu did, from the Asuras, who in this case were the cruel and vindictive gods themselves. The two thoughts then of life and of salvation seem to unite in Viṣṇu and may well account for the fact that this solar deity and not Savitṛi or Sūrya or Pūṣan attained the place which he pre-eminently holds as the centre of Indian theistic devotion.

But while even in the main stream of orthodoxy as represented by the Brāhmaṇas there were influences moving in the direction of an ethical monotheism and gathering round the name of Viṣṇu, elsewhere others as well of a similar character were at work—some of them perhaps rival influences and reckoned as heretical. In this connexion, however, one fact must be borne in mind. It is not necessary to suppose that *bhakti* or devotion, which is specially associated with theistic faith, always followed an independent line of development of its own, or that it arose entirely apart from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads or from other religious movements that may have made their appearance at this time. We need not suppose that it was isolated from its religious surroundings or that it moved in a separate region of ideas. It may—and as a matter of fact we find that it continually does, wherever there is strong religious feeling—make its appearance in almost any religious environment. Some environments are, no doubt, more favourable to it than others, but there are few that in the grasp of its strong inward fervour cannot be transformed to its purpose. It may be seen struggling to break the bonds that Pantheism is seeking continually throughout the history of Indian thought to lay upon the human spirit; it may even be found at times blossoming from the dark places of the worship of demonic powers. Is it not round the repellent form of Śiva that so much of the fervid devotion of the Tamil saints has gathered? What a writer on Greek religion has remarked in a similar connexion of this lower, gloomy worship

in contrast with the higher, hopeful worship of such gods as Apollo in Greece or Viṣṇu in India applies equally here. 'Olympian ritual may seem,' this writer says, 'as compared with Chthonic, to be more advanced, more humane, but though rites of "riddance"[1] have a harsh and barbarous sound, we cannot forget that this "riddance"—half physical though it is —has in it the germs of a higher thing, the notion of spiritual purification.'[2] It is impossible to say on what unfruitful stem the spirit of devotion may have blossomed. We know that Buddhism did not prove inimical to it, and there are even Jain hymns that give beautiful expression to the response of human love to the divine compassion.[3] It is, however, the opinion of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar—and no one else can speak on such a subject with the authority that he possesses—that the main stream of the Theism of this period is to be found in the Bhāgavata or Pāñcarātra system which 'did not owe its origin to the Vedas or Upaniṣads'.[4] This, according to the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*, is 'an independent religion possessed by the Sātvatas', and using Vāsudeva as the characteristic name of the supreme deity. In the view of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar this religion was of Kṣatriya origin, the Brāhmans having apparently been excelled at this period in intellectual activity by the warrior and ruling class. In this connexion he points to the prominence of princes as religious teachers in certain of the Upaniṣads—though others see in this no more than an evidence of the politic Brāhman's recognition of the prince as the fountain of rewards—and to the fact that both Buddha and Mahāvīra were Kṣatriyas. It may be, he suggests, that 'a Kṣatriya of the name of Vāsudeva, belonging to the Yādava, Vṛiṣṇi, or Sātvata race, founded a theistic system'; or it is possible that he was a famous prince of the Sātvata race and on his death

[1] i. e. of magical purifications such as we find in all these dark worships.

[2] J. E. Harrison, *The Religion of Ancient Greece*, p. 46.

[3] e. g. *The Bhūpāla Stotra* (L. D. Barnett's *Heart of India*, p. 45).

[4] *Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts*, 1887, p. 72.

was deified and worshipped by his clan. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar finds a further indication of the existence of this Bhāgavata sect at this period in the growth of a sense of aversion to the bloody sacrifices of the past and the permission to substitute a *piṣṭayajña*, a 'barley ewe'. In his view *ahiṃsā* was a doctrine of their sect before the appearance of Buddhism. We have later in the *Mahābhārata*[1] an indication that this new doctrine was recognized as opposed to the pure teaching of the Vedas, but the fact that it was able to influence the powerful hierarchy and obtain recognition for its views even in the Brāhmaṇas seems to suggest that it may not have belonged to an altogether isolated religious stratum and that it is not at all likely to have been anti-Brāhmanical or to have lacked among its numbers—as has been the case in almost every movement of religious reform in India—Brāhman as well as Kṣatriya teachers.

Along with Vāsudeva, and presently identified with him, appears Kṛiṣṇa, the central figure of the whole Vaiṣṇavite pantheon. Here again, in seeking to determine the origin of this god, there is full scope for the play of conjecture. Was he a hero who rose step by step to the high rank of divinity, or was he a monotheistic reformer, as Vāsudeva may have been—a theistic Buddha before Buddha's day, who later, like the Buddha also, was himself deified by his disciples? Some scholars, influenced, some may perhaps think, by too easy analogies from other fields of primitive religious belief, find in Kṛiṣṇa a development from one of those early vegetation deities that seem to have been so widely worshipped and to have obtained so strong a hold of men's devotion in all countries of the world. Such were Adonis, the Egyptian Osiris and Dionysus. The evidence that is adduced to connect Kṛiṣṇa with the renewal of the life of vegetation in the spring need not be detailed here. It is sufficient to mention his connexion with cattle as Govinda, the vegetation spirit being usually supposed to incarnate itself in such animals,

[1] *Mbh.* XII. 269. 9.

his near relationship with Balarāma, who is admittedly a god of harvest, his name Dāmōdara, the god 'with a cord round his belly', a description which is supposed to be derived from the wheat-sheaf, and, most significant of all, the evidence of the *Mahābhāṣya* that he appeared in what was evidently a 'vegetation masque', contending with Kaṃsa for the possession of the sun.

One may venture to suggest that there is no necessary contradiction between these views. Kṛiṣṇa may have been a deified hero or a sage or religious reformer whose name was transferred to the deity of the monotheistic sect of which he was the founder.[1] At the same time, the analogy of the history of other religious cults permits us to conjecture that into that new or revived monotheistic religion much may have passed which was a heritage from earlier and more primitive beliefs and which seems to us to assort ill with what in it is spiritual. We know that this was the case with many of the mediaeval forms of popular Christianity, and that indications of it are still to be found in the beliefs of not a few who profess themselves Christians. An alloy of Paganism was carried over into the spiritual faith of Christ by many of the new converts and became so amalgamated with it that, were it not for the record of the Founder's teaching, it would be hard to isolate the one element from the other. Similarly we may well believe that the original ground-work of Kṛiṣṇaism—as of many other religious movements that have showed themselves capable like it of having higher thoughts grafted upon them—was a vegetation cult, which later, by the influence, perhaps, of a reformer Kṛiṣṇa, was purified and spiritualized. If it be the case that the religion of Vāsudeva was at first distinct from that of Kṛiṣṇa, the two streams presently united to form one, and the two names became synonyms for the one god that their adherents worshipped, Kṛiṣṇa-Vāsudeva. There seems no reason at all

[1] Cf. Jacobi, *E. R. E.* II, p. 811[2]: 'In Kṛiṣṇa, a Rajput hero has coalesced with a shepherd-god (Govinda) into a new deity.'

why one should refuse to believe that as there were Buddha and Mahāvīra somewhat later, so there may have been two religious reformers of whom we know no more than the names, and who presently were identified with the deity of their worship. Certainly there seems to have been at this period much religious activity and freedom of intellectual speculation. Further it is of interest to note as strengthening the probability of the appearance in India of such religious reformers, that probably about the same period, that is in the sixth or seventh century B. C., there arose in the neighbouring country of Iran the great spiritual teacher and reformer Zarathustra.

Presently—at what period we cannot determine with any certainty—those two sectarian cults which had by this time, we may suppose, been united into one, formed a new combination and acquired additional authority and prestige by the identification of Kṛiṣṇa-Vāsudeva with the Vedic deity Viṣṇu. The deification of Kṛiṣṇa-Vāsudeva may quite possibly date from a period anterior to the time of Buddha. There is no evidence of his identification with Viṣṇu until the second century B. C., when indications in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali point at least to a close connexion between them.[1] Perhaps we may conjecture that even by the time of Buddha or soon thereafter the different theistic streams were tending towards each other. The implications of Indian thought have always been slow to declare themselves in definite action and concrete definition. It may have even taken centuries before a systematic method by which those kindred gods, along with others such as Paraśurāma and Rāma, could be linked up together. The idea of *avatāras*, when it was devised for that purpose, was by no means alien to the character of Viṣṇu, who from Vedic times was recognized as a god of grace and

[1] See *Ind. Ant.* III. 16 and *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, p. 172. 'Between the period of the *Bhagavadgītā* and that of the *Anugītā* the identity of Vāsudeva-Kriṣṇa with Viṣṇu had become an established fact.'—Bhandarkar's *Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 34.

one who had saved the world. The idea of *avatāras* or descents for some purpose of deliverance was entirely in harmony with the conception of this deity as being—in the words of an inscription of a later date, 'entirely devoted to the welfare of the universe.'[1] In this way the Vaiṣṇavite faith comes formally to embody in its creed one of the central thoughts of Theism. Heaven and earth are brought together in agreement with what is from the first the implicit aim of such a religion, and the distant Vedic sky-god is related in purposes of grace and of help with man in his distress. This, it may be maintained, is the central conception of every cult that follows the path of *bhakti* or 'loving faith', and indeed of any religion that really expresses and seeks to satisfy the longings of the human heart. It is possible, indeed, to find traces of the influence of this thought in many even of the most primitive forms of religious belief. Students of comparative religion may even hazard the conjecture that in the worship of the sun-god Viṣṇu we have the adoration of a sky-father, and in that of the fertility-god Kṛiṣṇa, if indeed that was its primitive form, adoration of some remote and nameless earth-mother, while on that view their harmony and co-operation would be that which is essential to fruitfulness in crops and beasts and men. But whether these analogies are anything more than far-fetched fancies—and certainly one must pronounce them exceedingly problematical—it does not follow that those primitive ideas may not have been spiritualized to something far worthier than they at first suggested. The fact that the child is the father of the man, as Dr. E. Caird has said somewhere in a similar connexion, does not mean that he has not out-grown his childishness. The union of earth and heaven, the coming together in loving fellowship, in devotion and in service of God and man is certainly the heart of all religion that can claim any real right to that designation, and about the name of Viṣṇu as well as of Kṛiṣṇa-Vāsudeva and his other *avatāras*, there have gathered more

[1] *J.R.A.S.*, 1907, p. 973.

than round any other divine names in India these comforting and uplifting thoughts. It is for that reason that those head waters of religious belief can rightly be claimed, with all the imperfections and inadequacies that must have continued to mingle with them after their emergence from the doubtful places of their origin,—and no one who reads the legends of Kṛiṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata* can doubt that these were many —to be reckoned among the main sources whence has flowed through the centuries until to-day the stream of Indian Theism.

III

THE THEISM OF THE UPANIṢADS

In what has been said of the growth, as far as it may be conjectured throughout the period of the Brāhmaṇas, of Theism and specially of the Bhāgavata religion in its different forms as worship of Viṣṇu, of Vāsudeva, and of Kṛiṣṇa, no account has been taken of a body of literature which is of a significance scarcely less than that of the *Ṛig Veda* itself in the long history of Hinduism. It is to this group of treatises, the Upaniṣads, that the name Vedānta has been given, and though the word may only signify that with them the Vedas come to a conclusion, to many it certainly is the case that, in accordance with the other interpretation of the word, the literature of the Veda finds in them its crown and final goal. Their dates are as doubtful as those of all the other documents of this period, but we may accept as certain this much at least, that the greater number of the earliest prose group date from before the period of Buddhism, and that they represent a religious movement arising independently of the Brāhmaṇas and largely antagonistic to their sacerdotalism. This antagonism is expressed sometimes with an irony that is worthy of Erasmus, as when a procession of dogs is described, marching like priests, each holding the tail of the dog in front and crying, 'Ôm, let us eat! Ôm, let us drink!'[1] But because the Upaniṣads represent a natural revolt from futile and unintelligent formalism, it does not follow that they were anti-Brāhmanical. The period and the region in which they arise were evidently signalized by a remarkable activity and freedom of thought. Certainly one cannot but be struck by the fact

[1] *Chānd. Up.* I. 12. 4-5.

that so often in the Upaniṣads non-Brāhmans are said to have possession of higher truth than those have attained to who were supposed to be the special guardians of spiritual knowledge, so that not infrequently Brāhmans have to sit at their feet and learn of them. It is, however, after all nothing surprising that this should be the case. Conservatism is usually the note of an established hierarchy which is more likely to lose than gain by activity of speculation. To expect the Brāhmans of the priesthood to be foremost in a movement which was iconoclastic in its character is to expect what is contrary to nature, but the deduction from that need not be that the movement was anti-Brāhmanical. There is no sign of such an attitude in the Upaniṣads themselves, which, if they have been revised to exclude such indications, might just as well have excluded all indications, in connexion with this religious renaissance, of Brāhman inferiority. We need as little suppose that the Upaniṣad thought was hostile to, and outside of, Brāhmanism as we suppose, because Keshub Chunder Sen was a Vaiśya, that that is the case in regard to the Brāhmo-Samāj. What we are rather to remark is the freedom of thought which seems to have prevailed at this time and of which we have many indications. As a result of it a bewildering number of conjectures were hazarded as to the solution of the problem of the universe, and that not only by Brāhmans but by Kṣatriyas, and even by women.

On the other hand, it is equally unnecessary for us to suppose that there was any antagonism between the Bhāgavata religion and much of the speculation of the Upaniṣads, or even that they affected entirely different strata of the population. No doubt the Upaniṣad thought was confined to a limited circle, and to a large extent at least, as the Upaniṣads themselves indicate, was pursued in secret, while the worship of personal gods was much more widely spread. But there is no necessary opposition between much of the speculation of those books and the devotion of the Bhāgavatas. We may, indeed, conjecture that in all probability some of these unnamed

thinkers were themselves in their religious life worshippers of Viṣṇu and of other gods, such as Kṛiṣṇa-Vāsudeva, around whom the popular devotion had gathered. The colder atmosphere of the Upaniṣads is after all the almost inevitable atmosphere of reflection, and some at least of the attempts of thoughtful men, that are furnished in these books, to construe their religion in terms of reason are in no necessary antagonism to that 'passionate Theism' of a later period which is described by Sir R. G. Bhandarkar as the characteristic note of the *bhakti* worshipper. Though we cannot suppose that there was as yet anything that can be described as monotheism within even the circle of those who called themselves Bhāgavatas, yet we may well believe that there was that which was on the way there, and that some of those who uttered the private longings of their hearts before the feet of these gods may have been the same who sought in the Upaniṣad speculations an intellectual solution for the mystery of the being of God and the nature of things. No doubt the philosopher is not often at the same time the saint, but there is no reason why they should not both arise within the same circles of thought. No doubt also when the thinkers of the Upaniṣads pass over the boundary of metaphysics into the realm of religion and point out the way of deliverance and of union with the Ultimate as it appears to them, their teaching seems often far enough away from the method of deliverance by 'loving faith'. If the Ultimate is construed as an idea or an energy, then certainly the way to the goal will share in the coldness and the moral emptiness of the goal itself. In the case of some, however, we may be sure that their speculations appeared to themselves at least to leave still something worthy and satisfying in that to which their aspirations were directed and to make it possible for them to seek it with a moral ardour. If there seems little enough fuel in these treatises with which to kindle in any one a 'passionate Theism', yet the difference between the more intellectual religion here set forth and the emotional fervour of the worshipper of Vāsudeva,

may often be only a difference of degree, and not the fundamental antagonism which is implied if the teaching of the Upaniṣads is set down without discrimination as simply Pantheism. Practically all the religious thought of India, we must remember, is pantheistic in the sense that the immanence of God in the universe became early for it an axiom. The whole drift of its reflection is in that direction and continually it overflows, as it were, into pantheistic monism. As in the religious thought of the West the temptation, we may say, is to rest content with a crude deism, so in the East there is always a tendency in the direction of monistic idealism. This must not be forgotten when we are endeavouring to interpret the meaning of the speculations of the Upaniṣads, while at the same time we must recognize that in the earlier stages especially of these speculations there are halting-places short of that goal. Sometimes, probably, the logical consequences of his conjecture are not fully present to the thinker, and there is all the while in it a latent antagonism to Theism of which he is largely unaware. On the other hand, there were no doubt always those who, like the author of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, conscious of the practical ineffectiveness of a cold intellectualism, sought to bring its results more into harmony with those beliefs which move and control the heart.

It is, indeed, somewhat futile to attempt to discriminate among the various currents of religious tendency which, with much audacity of thought and much freedom of expression, were at that period troubling the deep waters of the Indian spirit in the Ganges plain. It may well have been that in that atmosphere, heavy with the burden of its heat, and morbid with its weariness, men's minds might spend themselves in over-subtlety of speculation, and esteem no attainment more to be desired than final escape from the bondage of an existence that had in it nothing that deserved to be desired. In that environment many fantastic forms of thought and of religious practice flourished with an unhealthy luxuriance. There were, no doubt, at this time, and we cannot tell

from how ancient a period, those who, by concentration, by *tapas*, or the heat that their own inward nature generated, sought to realize their aspirations. A close relationship may be traced between the ascetic practices of those Yogīs, by means of which they believed themselves able to bring the powers of nature under their control, and the magic and superstition of which an early glimpse is afforded us in the *Atharva Veda*. These ascetics seem far enough removed from the theosophist who seeks by knowledge to attain the same goal of escape from this world of change and sorrow. And yet here again it may well be that in the peculiar psychology of the Yogī and the crude speculation of the magic-monger we have one of the sources of a section of the speculation of the Upaniṣads. The *Atharvan* knows already something of the importance of the 'breaths', the vital forces.[1] It may be that that stratum of Upaniṣad theosophy which passes most easily into monistic Pantheism,—that which travels to the Ultimate by the continual refinement of the physical, seeking the 'subtle essence' of all things, and which is therefore least ethical,—derives in great measure from this disreputable source. The claims that are made in certain passages in behalf of knowledge seem closely akin to the superstitious belief in the power of a *mantra* or magic formula. 'He who knows' something 'becomes' that thing. The ascent to *Brahman* by the ladder of progressive *tapas* is a material progress to an unethical end, but at the same time it is possible to combine with this unmoral discipline faith (*śraddhā*), an inward emotion that leads the heart by a way less barren and unsatisfying.[2]

The bewildering variety of speculations that are accumulated in this literature may indeed be classified roughly under two heads. Many appear to be mainly physical and metaphysical. The problem here is, What is the substrate of the universe? What is the Ultimate? What is that *Brahman* in which all things inhere? The question of union with that Ultimate and

[1] *A. V.* XV. 15; Hopkins, *R.I.*, p. 153.
[2] *Chānd. Up.* V. 10. 1.

of emancipation holds a secondary place. Those who are occupied with these thoughts are primarily philosophers. The practical interests of life and of deliverance from its bondage in union with God remain for them in the background. But there are others whose interest is rather in the problem of life, and of the way of escape from its shadows to that which is alone true and alone abiding. For this latter group the question of questions is, How can a man attain to that condition which is beyond reach of change—which is bliss in that abode where there is 'no sorrow and no snow'?[1] For the former, the problem is a more impersonal one, and one less engaged with human fears and human fate. In the *Śāṇḍilya Vidya*, for example, the discourse seems to move in a region purely metaphysical and abstract, and when, at its conclusion, for the first time a personal note is struck—'When I shall have departed hence, I shall obtain that *Ātman*'—it impresses one as quite perfunctory. On the other hand, the discussion in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* is vitally engaged with the problem of human loss and human destiny, while when Yājñavalkya discloses his deepest conviction to his beloved Maitreyī the atmosphere in which the two discourse together is vivid with reality and quick with living interest. The thought of the goal to which he seems to point may fill us, as it filled her, with 'utter bewilderment', but there is no question but that he is setting before her no abstract doctrine, but a message with an entirely practical bearing upon life and full of ethical content. It is in the latter group of speculations rather than the former that we shall expect to find the stream of Theism flow most richly. For the thinker may forget for a time the religious implicates of his thought, while he moves in the region of speculation, or seeks to dissolve into its ultimate elements the spirit of man or the life of the universe, but when he turns his eye again upon the spectacle of human struggle and reflects upon the problem of human fate, his thought assumes another and a more vital hue. The region of Theism,

[1] *Bṛihad. Up.* V. 10. 1.

we may claim, is the region of life, and every movement is antagonistic to it—whether it be engaged with the asceticism of the Yogī or with the speculation of the pure metaphysician —which turns its back upon the facts and upon the claims of life.

In seeking to make clear to ourselves the course of development of the religious teaching of the Upaniṣads and to decide how far it is in harmony with an ethical Theism, one is confronted at the outset by the difficulty of arranging the documents in their historical sequence. The most that we can do is to arrange them in certain groups and judge of the development of their thought by the help of so much of order as that affords us in their chaos. Perhaps we may further suggest as probable that of them all the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* is oldest while the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* comes next to it in age. The probability that the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* is of great antiquity appears to follow from the fact that it is so closely associated with the Brāhmaṇa and gives an allegorical account of the *Uktha*. The whole character of its reflection, too, gives evidence of its antiquity. An examination then of the Upaniṣads contained in it and of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* and especially of its Yājñavalkya sections, which certainly belong to a very early period in the development of the Upaniṣad doctrine and carry much authority, will help to determine at least whether, as Śaṅkarācārya maintained and as Professor Deussen too holds to-day, the original and normative teaching of the Vedānta was an idealistic monism, or whether it was something more in harmony with a theistic interpretation of the universe.

Here we have to remind ourselves once more that, as in the popular religion, so in these tentative constructions of a theory of the universe a full-orbed Theism is not likely to discover itself. What we may expect to find is that the views here and there propounded bear, some of them one, and others of them another, and yet another, of the characteristics of an ethical Theism. None of them is likely to possess them all. What

Ruskin says of the difficulty of pronouncing whether certain buildings are truly Gothic in their architecture or not illustrates appositely the question we are considering. He points out that all he can reason upon is 'a greater or less degree of Gothicness in each building', for, as he goes on to say, 'pointed arches do not constitute Gothic, nor vaulted roofs, nor flying buttresses, nor grotesque sculptures; but all or some of these things, and many other things with them, when they come together so as to have life'. The case before us here is exactly similar. We shall find in all probability a greater or less degree of Theism in the various speculations of this literature; and it is when this characteristic and the other 'come together so as to have life'—so as to present what may be a living ethical religion—that we can pronounce with confidence that this is truly theistic thought. What, then, are those characteristics of Upaniṣad doctrine which we can pronounce theistic, even as pointed arches and vaulted roofs are Gothic? And what are those elements, on the other hand, the presence of which seems to negate Theism and to show that the direction of the speculation in which they are found was away from it and hostile to it?

There are three main lines of inquiry which it will be necessary to pursue in order to answer these questions in regard to the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Whether or not that teaching is theistic will depend upon the conclusion to which those lines of inquiry lead us. In the first place we must ask, Were the Upaniṣads rightly interpreted by Śaṅkara as inculcating as their highest truth the illusoriness of the world and of the individual spirit, and the sole reality of an undifferentiated *Brahman*? Is *Māyāvāda* doctrine the true Vedānta? On such a view Theism is of course impossible. Further we have to ask, How is *Brahman* attained? In the measure in which the 'knowledge' which is prescribed as the means by which this goal is reached is purely intellectual, in that measure it is antagonistic to an ethical and theistic religion. The knowledge of and fellowship with a person

which Theism sets before it as its aim and end must be the expression of other elements in the worshipper's personality than his intellect alone. The less there is of ethical content in it, the more it approaches a metaphysical process and recedes from the region of faith and devotion. And in the third place the question must be asked, whether the union with *Brahman* which is sought is an absorption in which all difference is lost, or whether some element of awareness, such as Theism postulates, is supposed to remain to the emancipated soul? The spheres of these different inquiries do indeed overlap and cannot be demarcated strictly the one from the other, but each of them indicates a point at which Theism differentiates itself from what can quite definitely be designated Pantheism or Monism, and each of them therefore demands separate inquiry. As pointed arches and vaulted roofs and flying buttresses 'coming together so as to have life' constitute decisive Gothicness in a building, so we may call that thought theistic without hesitation or reserve which accepts the world and the individual soul as real alongside of *Brahman*, which recognizes a moral enlightenment as necessary to union with *Brahman*, and which demands a continuance of self-consciousness for the spirit that has passed into that final fellowship.

It may almost be accepted as demonstrated without further necessity of discussion that the doctrine of *māyā* is unknown to the Upaniṣads. Of those twelve that are considered oldest and most authoritative the word only occurs in one, the *Śvetāśvatara*, an Upaniṣad of the second period, and then only once. Even there, where *prakṛiti* is said to be *māyā* and the great Lord the *Māyin*, the word need mean no more than that he is the artificer and the world the product of his miraculous power. Only Śaṅkara's strained and unnatural effort to make the Upaniṣads consistent with each other and with his interpretation of them by postulating a higher and a lower level of truth can explain away the repeated representation of the world as a real creation. If the Upaniṣads in the *Aitareya*

Āraṇyaka are the oldest, then this and not 'idealistic monism' is the earliest view of the relation of the world and the Supreme Self. 'Verily in the beginning all this was Self, one only; there was nothing else blinking whatsoever. He thought, "Shall I send forth worlds?" He sent forth these worlds. . . . He thought, "There are the worlds; shall I send forth guardians of the worlds?" He then formed the *puruṣa*, taking him forth from the water.'[1] So far this account except for the word 'sent forth' is indistinguishable from that of ordinary Occidental Theism. Its distinctive note is struck later when it is said, 'When born, He (the Supreme Self) looked through all things in order to see whether anything wished to proclaim here another (Self). He saw this person only as the widely spread *Brahman*. "I saw it," thus he said.'[2] From this passage it is plain that to this early thinker it already was an axiom that all was *Brahman*—'one only without a second,' as a later *Upaniṣad* puts it—but nowhere is it suggested either that the worlds 'sent forth' from him or the *puruṣas* he formed were other than real. A closely similar passage is to be found in the *Chāndogya*,[3] where the old doctrine, to be found in the earlier literature, of creation out of nothing is explicitly rejected, as it is implicitly in the *Aitareya*, and the eternity of being is affirmed. Creation is the revelation of 'names and forms',[4] that is the communication of separate existence and individuality within the original, unmodified unity. There is no question of the reality of these modes of *Brahman*. Their reality in fact consists in their entire pervasion by *Brahman* which 'entered thither to the very tips of the finger-nails, as a razor might be fitted in a razor-case or a fire in a fire-place'.[5] In these and other passages the 'individualization of the Infinite' is due to his 'thought' or 'vision'—'Shall I send forth worlds?' 'May I be many, may I grow forth.'[6]

[1] *Ait. Āraṇ.* II. 4. 1.
[2] Ibid. II. 4. 3. 10.
[3] *Chānd. Up.* VI. 2. 1 ff.
[4] *Chānd. Up.* VI. 3. 2. Also *Bṛihad. Up.* I. 4. 7.
[5] *Bṛihad. Up.* I. 4. 7.
[6] *Ait. Āraṇ.* II. 4. 1, 2; *Chānd. Up.* VI. 2. 3.

There is no hint that this is a deceptive thought or that this creation, this plurality, is unreal. To deduce from these and similar passages a doctrine of *māyā* because of the strong affirmation of the original unity is to interpret them with a pedantic literalness which is foreign to the whole spirit of the speculation.

As a matter of fact a survey of the whole of the speculation of the earlier Upaniṣads justifies us in affirming the reality of the universe as due to the fact that it is *Brahman* 'sent forth' and fashioned into diverse forms distinguished by 'name and form'. Everything depends on how much is meant by 'name and form', and it may well be that to some of the thinkers this implies a more real and permanent existence than to others. In the case of man, as we shall see, the losing of 'name and form' seems to signify in the view of some of the Upaniṣads at least, something approaching to complete absorption,[1] but certainly that does not appear to be true of all. In general, one may affirm that in the Upaniṣads the central thought is that 'all these creatures', as Uddālaka Āruṇi says to his son Śvetaketu, 'have their root in the true, they dwell in the true, they rest in the true'.[2] Even when he uses the formula which is accounted the very charter of idealistic monism—'Thou, O Śvetaketu, art it'—'*tat tvam asi*'[3]—it is probable that no more was meant than that the inner reality of man's life is *Brahman*—that in it which is true and abiding. Sometimes, no doubt, this thought is mainly presented as a metaphysical or physical explanation of the universe, and this seems to be in the background even of these words of Āruṇi, for he speaks of this Self as the 'subtle essence'.[4] As a matter of fact the spiritual and physical spheres are not yet demarcated in these speculations, and we must not look for systematization and consistency in what is as yet with all its subtlety only the childhood of Indian thought. This strong assertion of the essential and inner identity of the universe

[1] *Muṇḍ. Up.* III. 2. 8; *Praś. Up.* VI. 5.
[2] *Chānd. Up.* VI. 8. 6.
[3] Ibid. VI. 8. 7.
[4] Ibid. VI. 8. 7.

and the *Ātman* is really in its ethical aspect nowise different from the great message of Yājñavalkya to Maitreyī: 'Verily the worlds are not dear that you may love the worlds, but that you may love the *Ātman*, therefore the worlds are dear.' So long as the permanence and the freedom of the individual soul are recognized, this strong affirmation of the divine immanence in all things is not necessarily antagonistic to Theism. How far this doctrine tends to become anti-theistic will appear when we consider whether in the Upaniṣads the souls of the emancipated are absorbed and indistinguishably lost in the Universal Self. Meantime we can conclude that while the direction of Upaniṣad thought is towards an abstract and empty *Brahman*, out of which a universe in which are real distinctions and a real plurality can with difficulty be conceived to emerge, yet its whole emphasis meantime is upon the reality of that universe as in the last analysis produced and sustained by *Brahman*. Its error, which produces in the end the doctrine of *māyā*, lies just in the fact that it is by a process of analysis and of continual abstraction that the ultimate reality is reached. The thought now is that there *is* such an ultimate reality, and that it constitutes the reality of all things. Later it might appear to follow as a consequence that all things were empty and unreal. In the Upaniṣads, however, that consideration has not yet emerged with any distinctness. The quest for the ultimate truth has reached for them its goal in *Brahman*, and in it all things are real.[1]

So far it seems possible to rule out of the teaching of the Upaniṣads the *Māyāvāda* doctrine, and to claim at least that that fatal obstacle to a theistic interpretation of their message has not yet presented itself. The question we have now to ask is whether the 'knowledge' with which *Brahman* is so often identified, and which for that reason is so often prescribed as the chief means by which the goal of *Brahman* is reached, is compatible with any conception of it which leaves room for

[1] *Brahman* (masc.) is found in *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇ.* III. 5, and *brahmaloka*, which almost postulates a personal *Brahman* (A. Berriedale Keith).

a real Theism. It is fairly obvious that in any religion excessive intellectualism is opposed to a warmly ethical Theism. It leads both in the teaching of the Upaniṣads and of Aristotle to the view that the highest life is one of contemplative activity in the presence of a God who is at best a pure self-contemplative intelligence. The more the Upaniṣads tend to limit the nature of *Brahman* to *prajñā* (intelligence), and the method of attaining that goal to processes predominatingly intellectual, the farther they recede from Theism or from any view of the religious life which is likely to be ethically valuable. Now it can hardly be disputed that there is a tendency throughout the Upaniṣads in that direction and away from Theism. The quest for unity, which underlies alike the speculations of the philosopher and the aspirations of the religious man, naturally at first—as we see in the case of Aristotle and of the Neoplatonists no less than of the unknown authors of these works—endeavours to reach its goal by the method of excluding all difference. It seemed to some of these thinkers at least that in the exercise of the intelligence alone was man able to emancipate himself from individual conditions and from the contingency of things, and to rise into intimate communion with the divine which, just because it is divine, must be, as they considered, pure undifferenced being.

Now it is obvious, as has been said, that the tendency of such a view of things, by divorcing contemplation as the highest state of spiritual attainment from action, and God or *Brahman* as the highest Being from all participation in phenomenal existence, must necessarily be away from anything like a true ethical Theism. It can hardly be denied that a considerable portion of the teaching of the Upaniṣads is in that direction, and that Śaṅkara's doctrine is the fine flower that blossoms from this root. But at the same time, on the one hand, it does not appear that the logical consequences of this tendency were present to the majority of the thinkers of the Upaniṣads any more than they were to Aristotle or to Plotinus, or that they were aware that their view of ultimate

Being and of man's relation to it must prove fatal to a real religious life. Nor, on the other hand, was their method of abstraction and of pure intellectualism the method of conceiving of *Brahman* and of reaching union with him which presented itself by any means to all of these *ṛiṣis*. It may further be claimed in this connexion that the Upaniṣad doctrine which is earliest in date was less predominatingly intellectual than that which grew up later, and that it was quite in harmony with a theistic interpretation of the world. In the oldest of the three Upaniṣads of the *Aitareya* the nature of the *Ātman* is not conceived of as purely *prajñā* (intelligence). Man is 'he who looks before and after and pines for what is not', and in these characteristics, which differentiate him from the other animals, consists his greatness.[1] He is 'the sea, rising beyond the whole world. If he should reach that (heavenly) world, he would wish to go beyond'.[2] Here man's greatness and his divinity are rightly perceived to rest in his full and manifold nature and the infinite reaches of his soul. It is not suggested that he must unlade the rich cargo of his spirit, that he may come into fellowship with God. In the second Upaniṣad in this *Āraṇyaka*, while a further step is taken, and it is definitely stated that the Self is knowledge, and that knowledge is *Brahman*,[3] that knowledge is vitally connected with all life and action, and is that by which we will and breathe, love and desire. It is not yet suggested that these practical interests are alien to *Brahman*, or unworthy of him who seeks his fellowship. It is only in the third and latest Upaniṣad of this *Āraṇyaka* that a later agnostic doctrine makes its appearance, and it is declared that the knowing Self cannot be known.[4]

So also in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya* the process by which *Brahman* is realized and reached is not purely intellectual, and not therefore irreconcilable with a theistic conception of his nature. It is largely a moral process of self-purification and self-control, of meditation and insight. No doubt intellectual perception has a chief place among the

[1] II. 3. 2. [2] II. 3. 3 f. [3] II. 6. 1. 5. [4] III. 2. 4. 19.

means by which the goal of the spirit is reached. It has to be admitted that the Upaniṣads are, as philosophy has a tendency often to be, aristocratic works placing intellectual culture first as a means to man's highest attainment, while a really practical Theism with its appeal to the whole man is generally democratic. But while it is affirmed in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* that he that knows attains, it is only when with his knowledge he has 'become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient and collected' that he 'sees self in *Ātman* and sees all as *Ātman*'.[1] More important than the possession of learning (*pāṇḍitya*) is the attainment of the spirit of the child (*bālya*) and of the spirit of the sage (*Mauna*).[2] Even in the *Śāṇḍilya Vidyā* it is man as क्रतुमय, which Max Müller translates 'a creature of will', who obtains the *Ātman*.[3] Similarly elsewhere in the *Chāndogya* the way to *Brahman* and to satisfaction is largely a moral progress, by which the seeker 'shakes off all evil as a horse shakes his hairs, and as the moon frees herself from the mouth of Rāhu'.[4] It is not necessary to refer to passages in other Upaniṣads, about whose Theism there is no controversy, to show that the method of attaining to the *Ātman* according to their teaching is not that of making the human spirit a desert save for the pale wind-flowers of the intellect. No one questions that in the *Kaṭha* and the *Muṇḍaka*, for example, we find set forth a moral discipline as the means by which the soul is to be prepared for the self-communication of an *Ātman* who 'chooses' it.[5] What is here maintained is that from the first to many of the *ṛiṣis* of the Upaniṣads 'knowledge', as in the Hebrew use of the word, though not to the same extent, is an ethical as well as an intellectual activity. They lay, indeed, perhaps excessive stress on the intellectual element in the means of man's deliverance, in the guidance that his reason gives him in travelling along the path 'narrow as a razor's edge' to the

[1] *Bṛihad. Up.* IV. 4. 23.
[2] Ibid. III. 5. 1. Cf. *S.B.E.*, vol. XV, p. 130, note, and Deussen, *Phil. of Upaniṣads*, p. 58.
[3] *Chānd. Up.* III. 14. 1.
[4] Ibid. VIII. 13. 1.
[5] *Kaṭha Up.* I. 2. 23, 24; *Muṇḍ. Up.* III. 2. 3, 4.

high goal from whence there shall be no return to lower levels, even as did also Plato and Philo. No doubt this element is largely determinative of the whole process, and affects in a vital manner the series of speculations which make up the Vedānta, overlaying and obscuring the purely religious idea which was to be found in all probability at that very period more vividly expressed in the devotional cults in which later the word *bhakti* came to be commonly employed. But, while that has to be admitted, it remains that to many the knowledge which *Brahman* was conceived to be was not a cold and colourless atmosphere stirred by no breath of moral life, nor was the way there a purely intellectual process. In less measure no doubt than to the Hebrew prophets and to St. John, yet in some real measure, the word had an ethical content which made it the means to a genuine religious fellowship with a God still recognized as able to enter into personal relations with men. There was room for the exercise of moral discipline, and for the experience, in the presence of one who was not only knowledge but bliss, of a truly spiritual peace. The reflections of these seers may not have been often productive of a passionate Theism, but they were not, in spite of their emphasis on knowledge, necessarily anti-theistic.

We now pass to the third question and that which is most important of all in determining whether or not the thought of the Upaniṣads is such as to make Theism impossible. This question is whether the union with *Brahman* which is always the goal of effort is an absorption in which all difference is lost or whether the emancipated soul still retains self-consciousness. It is certainly the case that there are many passages in which the identification of the individual self and the universal Self is affirmed with an absoluteness that seems to justify the conclusion of Thibaut that the one is 'completely merged and indistinguishably lost' in the other.[1] But here again we must bear in mind that the language of these seers is not that of precise definition. Just because they are seers, as much as

[1] *S. B. E.* XXXIV, p. cxxi.

they are thinkers, their statements should not be treated with a too pedantic literalness. If we take, for example, one of the most striking passages in which Yājñavalkya expounds the state of final liberation, we shall perhaps realize that this is the case. 'Now as a man,' he says, 'when embraced by a beloved wife, knows nothing that is without, nothing that is within, thus this person, when embraced by the intelligent (*prajña*) Self, knows nothing that is without, nothing that is within. It is indeed in his (true) form, in which his wishes are fulfilled, in which the Self (only) is his wish, in which no wish is left—free from any sorrow.'[1] It appears to be the case that the simile made use of here, and common to all mystical doctrines of union, really expresses what is meant in most of the passages that describe in language almost of ecstasy the supreme goal of human longing. 'As a man, when embraced by a beloved wife, knows nothing that is without, nothing that is within'—this symbol of union is the hall-mark of mysticism in every country and in every age. The state imagined is one that may also be compared to the condition in deep sleep or to the mingling of rivers in the sea or salt melted in the water, but it is a state which defies definite determination; for it aims, if we may so express it, at the loss of individuality or what the Upaniṣads would call 'name and form' but the preservation at the same time in some subtle sense of conscious personality. 'When it is said', the writer goes on in a passage from the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* quoted above, 'that there he does not see, yet he is seeing, though he does not see. For sight is inseparable from the seer, because it cannot perish. But there is then no second, nothing else different from him that he could see.'[2] And so on with the other senses. In the words of Dr. Sukhtankar,[3] 'there is no actual empirical consciousness, but this is not because the souls cease to be conscious subjects'. How near the seer, Yājñavalkya, who is supposed to be the founder of the doctrine of complete absorption,

[1] *Bṛihad. Up.* IV. 3. 21. [2] Ibid. IV. 3. 23.
[3] Sukhtankar's *Teachings of Vedānta according to Rāmānuja*, p. 12, n.

approached to that view, while at the same time claiming to preserve for the emancipated soul continued existence and continued consciousness, is indicated in two passages by Maitreyī's expression of dismay and his response to it. On both occasions she, supposing that he had pointed her to the gulf of complete annihilation, cries, 'Sir, thou hast landed me in utter bewilderment,' and his reassuring response in the one case is 'Verily, beloved, that Self is indestructible and of an imperishable nature', and in the other, according at least to Dr. Sukhtankar's interpretation, 'Consciousness is possible in this state.'[1]

The fact is that the title of Pantheism so often applied to this whole body of speculations is a misnomer. Dr. E. Caird, in his luminous exposition of the closely parallel speculation of Plotinus, has distinguished the body of ideas to which it appears to me the reflection of the Upaniṣads belongs as mysticism from what is properly to be denominated Pantheism. Pantheism loses God in the world; this doctrine separates God or *Brahman* altogether from the world. 'The *Ātman* is to the Indian', says Oldenberg, 'certainly the sole actuality, light diffusing; but there is a remainder left in things which He is not.'[2] There is no remainder in the view of Pantheism. The thesis of the Upaniṣads is that the *Ātman* is the only valuable, and we must not cease from mental and from moral toil until we reach it—hard as it is to reach. According to Pantheism one can never get away from God, for all is He and He is all; according to this type of mysticism, the problem always supremely urgent—for it is the one thing that matters—and always in a strict application of its principles impossible, is how to get to God. Emptying his life of every finite interest, the mystic seeks to climb to a divine unity, so rarefied and so remote, that it cannot be characterized and therefore cannot be known. He would lose even his consciousness of self, for

[1] *Brihad. Up.* IV. 5; II. 4. 13; cf. Jacobi in *E.R.E.* II, p. 801[2], 'It may be doubted whether absolute identity is meant.'

[2] Oldenberg's *Buddha* (English transl.), p. 39.

so only it seems to him that he can know God; and yet he dare not lose it, for then he knows he would himself be lost. Thus this view embodies a continual struggle to express what is inexpressible and to reach what is unattainable. The later doctrine of Śaṅkara may perhaps be named Pantheism—strange as its Pantheism is—for it says that *Brahman* is all, because all but *Brahman* is false. But the teaching of the Upaniṣads, though it seems akin to Pantheism in that it holds that *Brahman*, the real, is immanent in all things, yet differs from Pantheism in that that real is only reached and known by emptying all things of that which seems to give them being and strength. Pantheism rejoices in the world and in all the things of the world; for are they not God? This mysticism is continually purging the world of its dross to reach that ultimate and subtle essence which is *Brahman*. Properly speaking *Brahman* is conceived of rather as transcendent than as immanent; for if all things are real in it, that reality is something ever beyond and elusive. Again and again, it is said, 'That *Ātman* is a bank, a boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded.' . . . 'Therefore when that bank has been crossed, night becomes day indeed, for the world of *Brahman* is lighted up once for all.'[1] But to reach that further bank, how difficult it is! To accomplish this and enter into the light of that day has been the task that has absorbed the labour of the mystic's spirit in every age. But who can climb where the ladder of the human consciousness cannot reach? Who can abide in an atmosphere so rare that human spirits cannot breathe in it and live? 'That Self is to be described by "Neti, Neti",' says Yājñavalkya to Maitreyī. 'It is in truth unspeakable,' says Plotinus, 'for if you say anything of it you make it a particular thing.' Even St. Augustine repeats with approval the saying that we must not even call God ineffable, since this is to make an assertion about Him, and He is above every name that is named; and again

[1] *Chānd. Up.* VIII. 4. 1. 2; cf. *Bṛihad. Up.* IV. 4. 22; *Mait. Up.* VII. 7.

'sciendo ignoratur et nesciendo cognoscitur'.[1] 'The double aspect of God as the one in whom all is lost and yet the one in whom all is found seems to be expressible only by asserting the failure of all expression.'[2] If the Christian Mystics, who never doubted their own Theism, shared with the *ṛiṣis* of the Vedānta these speculations and these hopes, setting their whole heart's desire on a fellowship which at the same time they placed beyond all properly conscious attainment, surely we need not doubt that those older thinkers may have cherished, and certainly in some cases *did* cherish, the same theistic faith. It is these religious longings—mingling with their speculations, and giving their writings, as they gave the writings of Plotinus, a 'troubled intensity'—in which, more than in any positive results they reach, consist their value and their fascination.

[1] 'Our knowledge hides Him from us: by our ignorance He is known.' Inge's *Christian Mysticism*, p. 111; E. Caird's *Evolution of Religion*, I, p. 141.

[2] E. Caird, *Evolution of Theol. in the Greek Philosophers*, II, 307.

IV

THEISM WITHIN BUDDHISM

WHILE the main course of religious speculation and reflection in India in the pre-Christian centuries lies through the Upaniṣads and the perplexing manifold of their conjectures, and while there can be little doubt that during that period, as always, the popular faith in all the variety of its expressions, sometimes sincerely devout, sometimes simply superstition, continued to persist, the religious situation is far from being completely presented so long as we neglect those great movements of revolt of which Jainism and Buddhism are the most important. It may seem strange that one should have to follow the tracks of Indian Theism even across the borders of systems such as these. Widely as they differ from each other, they are both at one in denying a personal Supreme Spirit. And yet a closer examination reveals the fact that genuine elements of the theistic tradition were present especially in Buddhism from its very inception, and that with the development of the religion these discovered themselves more and more fully. It is natural indeed that this should be the case; for those new religions did not, any more than other religions elsewhere, spring full-grown from the brains of their founders, nor are they out of organic relation to the speculation and the devotion that precede them, as though they were, to use the metaphor of the Sanskrit schoolmen 'flowers in the sky' or 'horns on a hare'. Both Jainism and Buddhism are after all phases of the long Hindu development, absorbing elements from its complexity and responding to certain demands of the spirit it expresses. In consequence we may expect to find within them in greater or less degree the devout aspirations,

the religious inwardness, the recognition of the claims of purity of life which are among the characteristics of the Theism which these new religions expressly repudiate.

It is not necessary that Jainism should long detain us. Perhaps for the reason that within it the theistic elements of which we are in search are few and feeble, its significance in the Indian religious development is not great, and the extent of its influence has not been wide. Two characteristics, however, which it shares with Buddhism may well have passed into it from the popular worship of the period. These are its opposition to the system of caste [1] that was even then laying its grasp upon the community, and which the Brāhmanic intellectualism fostered and, along with this, the missionary spirit which it inspired in its adherents. Its opposition to caste may indeed have been little more than an opposition to Brāhman exclusiveness; and certainly the caste spirit soon reasserted its power within the religion; but for a while the logic of the heart prevailed. The way of salvation that Mahāvīra preached may also have been a difficult one which could be followed only by those who were willing to practise the cruellest asceticism, yet the fact remains that, as distinguished from the aristocratic Brāhman way of knowledge, it was open to all to tread. The Jainas have long since forsaken the message that Mahāvīra gave to them in this matter at least, and perhaps this fact accounts to some extent for the failure of the movement he initiated to grow to anything greater in India than Jainism is to-day. Certainly in its original democratic character and in its universalism, we have two notes of Theism which the sect of Mahāvīra may have learned from such worships as that of Vāsudeva-Kṛiṣṇa, and which at least testify to a certain religious vitality within its borders. The closely allied sect of Ājīvikas are said [2] to have

[1] The most advanced position taken up by early Buddhism is that presented in the *Assalāyana Sutta*, 'the drift of which is to show the indifference of caste.'

[2] Kern, *Geschiedenis*, I, p. 14.

been worshippers of Nārāyaṇa, and if so would seem to have been recruited from the adherents of the popular Viṣṇu worship, even as the Buddhists were from the Jaṭilas who were worshippers of fire.[1] The religious earnestness that expressed itself in these various reforming movements must frequently have had its source among the devout adherents of those theistic cults.[2]

There must indeed have been much religious earnestness and much questioning at the time when these new ways of deliverance were sought and found. In the sixth century before Christ the Magadha or middle district of Northern India seems to have been the scene of much religious activity. The doctrine of transmigration had by this time laid its heavy burden upon the hearts of the people, with the result that the passionate quest of all awakened spirits, whether they were mendicants or kings, was for immortality, for deliverance from that bondage which was life itself. The orthodox—the majority with little clear consciousness of an ultimate goal—pursued it along the 'road of works', the way of rite and of oblation, established and guarded by the Brāhmanic hierarchy. The intellectuals, not able to remain content with this, sought the same goal along the 'road of knowledge', reaching it at last by the intuition that perceives the spirit within to be one with the spirit that is ultimate and alone. The devout worshipped in loving faith the god of their devotion, believing that his grace would save them in the midst of a world of *saṃsāra*. But the most earnest among all these, whatever their doctrine or their worship, 'their hair grown white and having seen their son's son'—would take the staff of the mendicant and go forth as seekers, *Śramaṇas*, *Yogīs*, *Munis*, *Yatis*—labouring to reach by self-torture or by mental exercises, the goal of deliverance so passionately desired.

[1] Poussin, *Opinions*, pp. 223, 224.

[2] For evidence that even Jainism, in spite of its denial of a Supreme Spirit, could find room within itself for such devotion to a personal Redeemer as is so often found in theistic faiths, see the *Bhūpāla Stotra*, translated by L. D. Barnett in his *Heart of India*, p. 45.

Two young men, afterwards among the most distinguished of the disciples of Śākyamuni, bound themselves by a promise that the first to win the prize of immortality would tell his friend. 'Everywhere were to be met those who claimed, "I am a *buddha*; I possess enlightenment, the true way of salvation", blind leaders of the blind.'[1]

When Gautama Śākyamuni made this same claim, he did so as one who had found a way in many respects indeed new and untried, but into which at the same time elements are certain to have entered of the older religious experience and the older discipline. 'The Buddhist tradition', says M. Senart,[2] 'certainly moves in a Kṛiṣṇaite atmosphere. . . . More or less altered and distorted, a certain Viṣṇuite inheritance survives, carried down by Buddhist currents.' That this is the case there is abundant evidence to prove. The marks, for example, on the new-born child designating him as the future Buddha and the title *mahāpuruṣa* frequently given to him connect his story unmistakably with pre-Buddhistic solar legends, and in particular with Nārāyaṇa, the deity of the Bhāgavatas, as he was of the Ājīvikas, and himself identified with the sun-god Viṣṇu. MM. Senart and Poussin[3] are of opinion that there was an intimate relation between the new way of deliverance and the old theistic cults, and affirm with confidence that devout worshippers of Nārāyaṇa, as well as other Viṣṇuite sectaries, had much to do in the making of the Buddhist doctrine even from its inception. The evidence of this is not merely in the numerous indications of the survival within Buddhism of fragments of the solar worships to which the converts to the new faith had formerly belonged. It is impossible to break altogether the entail of human thought. The early history of Christianity, we know, tells of similar legacies from paganism, of Greek heroes baptized into saints, of Greek philosophy imposing its categories upon the teaching

[1] Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 63.
[2] Senart's *Origines bouddhiques*, p. 24.
[3] *Opinions*, pp. 241–8.

of the Church. So within Buddhism we not only find the old gods transformed and the old legends re-written, but along with these things a strong element of religious faith, which had been before associated with such worships as that of Nārāyaṇa and of Viṣṇu and which now appears attaching itself to the figure of the new teacher and greatly modifying his doctrine. It may seem strange at first that it should be possible for the devotion which characterized these theistic cults to persist at all in the atmosphere which Buddhism created, but a closer acquaintance with the personality of Gautama himself, as the records represent him, and with the spirit of simplicity and earnestness which characterized his message reveals a deep affinity beneath the superficial contrast. It is the case, as has been acutely observed, that to Hindus in all periods of their religious history the primary concern is with the problem of deliverance, while the question of what God is or whether there is a God at all is secondary. In this respect they differ radically from at least Semitic and Christian peoples, whose whole religious history is governed and controlled by their thought of God and their dream of what He may be. To the Indian, religion is always a method of emancipation, 'a way', and it is of little consequence—if that method be found and that way be followed—whether the gods be many or be one or none. To the Indian theist, indeed, this is less a matter of indifference, as his way of deliverance needs the grace and help of a divine being, but what precisely the status of that Being is, whether his place is unique and supreme, or whether he is merely a *mahāpuruṣa*, a great human friend somehow able to bestow the spiritual strength man needs, does not require to be clearly apprehended. With all the metaphysical acuteness of the Indian and his deeply planted speculative instincts it remains the case that, from first to last, man is for him the measure of all things. The object to which are bent all his mental efforts is the discovery of a way for man's escape.

That this practical aim was a chief characteristic of Buddhism from the beginning of its history no one can

doubt. It is essentially a 'humanism'—not a metaphysic or a theology, but a 'vehicle' for man's salvation, a 'path' for man's feet to walk in. It was all the more emphatically this because it presented itself to its founder as a 'middle way', avoiding not only the extreme of bloody ritual and cruel asceticism, but also that of unfruitful metaphysics. Each of these, no less than the new doctrine, was a *mārga*, a way of deliverance for the sufferer, but the *jñānamārga*, by maintaining the redemptive efficacy of knowledge, had lost its way among the mazes of over-subtle speculation. In contrast with those who occupied themselves with such barren problems, Buddha is a physician of the sick soul. Others, it seemed to him, had busied themselves with all sorts of unessential questions as to the patient's circumstances, and meantime the poor sufferer had died. 'I have not elucidated', says the Blessed One, 'that the world is eternal or that the world is not eternal, that it is finite or that it is infinite. . . . And why have I not elucidated this? Because this profits not nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion. . . . Misery have I elucidated—the origin of misery, the cessation of misery have I elucidated . . . because this does profit.'[1] This pragmatic agnosticism which is so characteristic of Buddhism is not something peculiar to this system alone. Even Yājñavalkya in the midst of his most daring speculations seems at times to have the sense that knowledge may be pursued with too great an ardour. He warns Gārgī that if her questions search too deep she may endanger her head.[2] Buddha builds his whole system upon such opportunism, avoiding especially any such definition of Nirvāṇa as would imply either survival on the one hand or annihilation on the other, and refusing to his disciples any metaphysical revelation. Confucius in China appears to have followed a similar course and to have declined 'to say the dead were conscious, lest rash sons should waste their substance in sacrifice', 'or to assert that they

[1] *Majjhima-Nikāya* in Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 122.
[2] *Bṛihad. Up.* III. 6.

were unconscious, lest careless sons should not sacrifice at all'.[1]

But such pragmatism or positivism in the Buddhist system does not necessarily prove theistic influences to be at work within its borders. That deduction can only be made if we are justified in maintaining that Buddha limited his horizon and rejected metaphysics in order to give more room to ethics. This is certainly the case, and it is here that the fundamental affinity of Buddhism with ethical Theism first betrays itself. It calls its adherents back to the moral law and to its claim. The distinctive character both of the Buddhist asceticism and of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* lies in the fact that in contrast with the doctrines that preceded and that surrounded them they have been largely moralized. The central fact of Gautama's Enlightenment is his perception of the defect in this respect of the old order of things. What justification by faith was to Luther that the perception of *bodhi* was in Buddha's own spiritual life and in the religious reformation that he initiated. This *bodhi*, in contrast with the goal sought by means of *tapas* and of sacrifice and of knowledge, is something primarily ethical and to be reached by 'moral conduct, meditation, and insight'. The asceticism that Buddha rejected, appeared to him to bear along with it all that was useless, 'even as punting pole and steering pole may bring along a water-snake'.[2]

There seems indeed to be little doubt that the whole body of ideas and of practices that gather round the word *tapas*, and also probably the theory of transmigration itself, had their roots among the worships of dark and evil forces and among the machinery for obtaining magical powers which were probably largely, though by no means exclusively, aboriginal in origin, and which throughout the whole history of Hinduism have proved least tractable to the influence of an ethical religion. The influence of this ancient tradition is still felt

[1] Parker's *Studies in Chinese Religion*.
[2] *E.R.E.* II, p. 70[2]; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, I. 103.

within Buddhism, but while it claims for its saints the miraculous prerogatives that were sought by Yoga practices, it remains true that, theoretically, moral perfection is alone important, for it alone leads to salvation. Its asceticism is a discipline, a 'placing of the bit in the colt's mouth', having for its aim in their relation to the things of this world the attainment of liberty—'just as a bird with his wings, O King, whithersoever he may fly, carries his wings with him as he flies.'[1] With all the deductions that one has to make on account of the contradictions and corruptions of its doctrine, it remains true that the place that Buddha holds in it and which is due, we may say, almost entirely to his moral authority, vindicates our claim for it that it is a system essentially ethical.

In bringing back the thoughts of men from ritual to conduct, from the brutalities of a self-torture that has no moral aim to the regulation and the restraint of passion, from the doctrine of a mechanical and fatal *karma* to one which could discern in it some justice and could hope for deliverance, Buddha was serving the interests and obeying the instincts of a true ethical Theism. The old doctrine of transmigration must have proved itself the implacable enemy of any such spiritual life as Theism at least recognizes. By moralizing it and finding a place within it for repentance (*saṃvega*) Buddha did something to reconcile this opposition.[2] Further, he secures recognition for one of the chief aspects of the divine by disclosing to his followers in the law of *karma* a justice absolutely infallible and supreme. Amarā refused to do wrong not only because she could not keep wrong-doing secret from the gods or from herself, but because 'even could she have remained ignorant of it herself, yet she could not have kept it secret from (the law of the result which follows on) unrighteousness'.[3] On this account alone, in the view of

[1] Rhys Davids's *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 81; *Digha*, I. 71.

[2] Cf. the repentance of the robber Ahiṃsaka or Aṅgulimāla in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* of the Majjhima.

[3] *Milinda*, p. 207; *S.B.E.* XXXV, p. 295; Rhys Davids in a note says that these words 'look very like a personification of *karma*'.

M. Poussin,[1] it is a slander to charge Buddhism with being an atheistic system. By recalling men to the virtue and the power of goodness and setting before them in his own person a human guide whose supremacy rested upon his moral achievement, Buddha at once brings back to religion the possibility of faith. *Śraddhā*, faith, which is identified with *bhakti*,[2] is 'the root of the correct view'[3]; it purifies the soul, and weakens or destroys evil passions; it enables us to cross in safety the river of life and to reach on the other bank Nirvāṇa. Buddha has made this faith possible to men because, while they were hesitating in ignorance and fear on the brink of the stream, he has come and, leading the way, enables them by faith likewise to leap, 'as it were by a bound into higher things'.[4]

Here we have surely, though struck with a certain hesitation, those essential notes which in their harmony make up almost the entire diapason of Theism. Buddhism calls its followers back to purity of conduct; it sets before them a moral ideal which is at once awful as law and humanly near and gracious as the Master, Buddha; it is universal in its appeal to man. These characteristics have but to be made more articulate and to be knit together closer into one for this atheistic doctrine to be recognized as the vindicator, in an age when God was being lost, of a truly ethical religion. During its long and complex history it has presented at one time and another various and often strongly antagonistic phases, and indeed the materials of these antagonisms are within it from the very beginning. Its animism and superstition developed to the hideous extravagances of Tāntric demonology; its monasticism opened more and more a gulf between it and the people and exchanged the old apostolic fervour for egoistic com-

[1] Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 70. [2] Ibid., p. 135.
[3] Ibid., p. 134; *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, I, p. 231; *Majjhima*, II, p. 176.
[4] *Milinda*, p. 36; *S.B.E.* XXXV, p. 56. Rhys Davids has a note on this passage that 'although the Buddhist faith and the Christian faith are in things contradictory, the two conditions of heart are strikingly similar both in origin and in consequence'.

placency and futile dialectic. But alongside of these movements, bearing it farther and farther away from Theism, there is a continuous process by which within the Mahāyāna development the elements that we have claimed as theistic in their affinities are emphasized and exaggerated. When he died, Buddha had said that the Law would take his place, but soon he was recognized as himself the Law personified. From the beginning there was rendered to Buddha what can only be described as worship, though it was not at first a *bhakti*, a devotion. No place is found in the early 'Vehicle' for grace or for prayer in any sense that religion can recognize. But Buddha places himself in a relation to his monks such as is bound to develop into a full-orbed worship with a service of love, when he says to them, 'Whosoever would wait upon me, he should wait upon the sick.'[1] It is no surprise to find springing from these roots a doctrine of grace, a view of Buddha closely approaching to that of *avatāras* or descents, and a conception of the message of the Master as a gospel to be preached to all men, whose salvation is something worthier for the saint to win than any *nirvāṇa* of egoistic contemplation.

The birth of Buddha, as M. Senart has pointed out,[2] was in reality not a birth but an *avatāra*, and it was by his own will that he chose to limit himself within the ordinary bounds of human life.[3] It is nothing surprising to find that by the beginning of the Christian era the personality of Śākyamuni had been completely elevated to deity. In the 'Lotus of the True Law' Buddha is not merely *deva*: he is *devātideva*. Even in earlier times a docetic heresy had arisen alleging his descent into the womb of his mother Māyā to be merely an illusion and his manifestation to the world to be that not of his real self but of a phantom.[4] At the same time, however, we have evidence that the current of Theism flowing through Buddhism is not strong enough to restrain the polytheistic

[1] *Mahāvagga*, VIII. 26. [2] *Légende*, p. 270.
[3] Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 237.
[4] *E. R. E.* II, p. 743[1]; *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (*S. B. E.* XXI, p. 301 n.).

instincts of the common Indian worshipper. As a consequence Śākyamuni soon occupied no more than a position of *primus inter pares*, while Amitābha sits on the right hand or on the left of Buddha in paradise and Avalokita saves the faithful by his irresistible grace, like a cat bearing her young to safety in her mouth. Here the reappearance of the old sectarian Theisms is manifest, for both of these great Bodhisattvas are described as possessing solar characteristics, while the latter, according to Poussin 'is the Viṣṇu of the Buddhist', exercising his grace in a manner that is described in the very metaphor adopted by one of the Vaiṣṇavite schools of the later day.[1]

We have in fact to recognize that Buddhism is best understood as a portion of the great amorphous whole of Hinduism, if we use that ambiguous word to describe the entire course of the long evolution of the Indian religious spirit. When it passed beyond the borders of India, other influences entered powerfully into its working—Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese—but its history till well on into the Christian era is the history of a phase of Hinduism that includes within it all the characteristic moods of the Hindu soul. As a consequence it contains, as we have seen, along with much else that seems difficult enough to reconcile with it, an undeniable theistic element, even distinct traces of the old mythology and superstitions in which the popular Theism has its roots. That this theistic strain persists within a professedly atheistic system, until it loses itself—corrupted and degraded—in polytheism and superstition, is due to certain characteristics of Buddhism present in it almost from the first. It was, to begin with, a religion of the spirit, recalling the worshipper from the barrenness of Gnosis and of ritual to piety and good conduct, and setting before them in Śākyamuni a being supernatural and infinitely gracious, whom the heart could trust and could adore. The person of the Buddha at once gives the opportunity to faith, while his teaching makes clear what Yājñavalkya had only groped after—that self-denial is the beginning of wisdom. To

[1] See p. 110, *infra*.

love oneself truly it is necessary that one love not oneself at all.[1] It may be, as M. Poussin suggests, that the Great Vehicle 'in giving a large place to devotion, to *bhakti*, in the discipline of salvation', 'opened the breaches to Tantrism',[2] but that should not hide from us the fact that, however grossly it was corrupted, in that circle of Buddhist ideas a genuine theistic message must be recognized. Had Buddhism at the same time been able to maintain the balance and spiritual sanity which characterized it in its earlier stages, it might have avoided so lamentable a conclusion. The title of 'teachers of the mean', which the Buddhists claimed, was fitly borne by them so long as they emphasized, in full agreement with the demands of ethical religion, the need of the occupation of the whole man with spiritual things. Not *prajñā* (intelligence) alone, as the Upaniṣad teachers were apt to suggest, is to be exercised, but it in due accord with other mental powers, with *śraddhā* (faith), with *vīrya* (effort), with *samādhi* (contemplation) and with *smṛiti* (mindfulness).[3] As the exaggeration of the place of knowledge in the Brāhmanic speculation of the time was peculiarly fatal to a religious life in any sense of the word that Theism is aware of, so the recovery for religion of the whole inner man in the harmonious exercise of his spiritual faculties means at least the recovery for the worshippers of the possibility of theistic religion. And further we cannot but recognize a like tendency in the emphasis that Buddhism lays always upon its message of deliverance, which penetrates with its savour the whole system 'even as is the great sea by the savour of salt'. The influence of this thought had much to do, no doubt, with the development of the doctrine, until along with a theory of descents or *avatāras* on the part of the Bodhisattva in later Buddhism goes, as its motive, a sense that the Bodhisattva's duty requires him even to renounce Nirvāṇa, that he may not only deliver himself but deliver

[1] *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, VIII. 173; Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 299.
[2] Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 412.
[3] See *Visuddhi Magga*, Chap. IV.

suffering men.[1] We see them 'rushing into Avīchi (hell) like swans into a lotus pool' in order to save creatures. They take upon themselves 'the whole burden of the suffering of all creatures', 'in order to bear it in the regions of hell'. This doctrine of compassion and of grace belongs to the very essence of the most advanced theistic religion, and it is in it that we find the peculiar vitality of Mahāyāna which enabled it to prevail over the colder Hīnayāna. The *Bodhisat* belongs to a far higher moral and spiritual region of ideas than the self-complacent *Arahat*, who is the ideal saint of the more orthodox system. The same ardent spirit is seen in the missionary zeal of the Mahāyāna saints, in Purna the Apostle to the Śronāparāntakas—a spirit far enough removed from the apathy of the canonical literature. In all these respects Buddhism proves itself truly heir to the theistic inheritance in Indian religion, though one must recognize that in its later phases, turned prodigal, it squanders its precious heritage in the wildest and most fantastic excesses.

[1] Aśvaghoṣa's *Awakening of Faith* teaches that Buddha has three bodies—'the eternal substance of the Truth revealed by him', which is his true body, as well as 'the Buddha in enjoyment (*saṃbhoga*)', and 'the Buddha incarnate or in kenosis (*nirmāṇa*), as, for example, Śākyamuni'. 'In order to attain the ideal of enlightenment it is necessary for us to believe in any of these three aspects of Buddha's personality, and to be saved by his grace (*parigraha*, lit. "grasping").' Anesaki in *E. R. E.* II, p. 160[1].

V

THE THEISM OF THE *BHAGAVADGĪTĀ*

In all the course of our investigation hitherto we have had to be content to piece together from one religious setting and another fragments of Theism,—approximations to its conceptions of God, often found in strangely incongruous relations. We have, to change the metaphor, been forcing our way through an obscure jungle of mythology and superstition and speculation, cheered now and again by glimpses of the sky above us and by shafts of sunlight breaking in upon the gloom. With the *Bhagavadgītā* we pass into a new region and into a clearer atmosphere. From the time when the great figure of Varuṇa was lost in the twilight of the Vedic gods no deity appears above the Indian horizon so worthy of worship, so morally exalted, as the 'Blessed One' of whom this song is sung. In it we have, perhaps, the nearest approach that it was possible for India unaided to make to ethical monotheism. We may not be able to maintain that we have here the loftiest of all the expressions of the Indian spirit. Some of the splendid speculations of the Upaniṣads transcend it in one direction; the unworldly counsels of the Buddha in another. But in its intellectual seriousness, its ethical nobility, and its religious fervour, the *Bhagavadgītā* presents to us a combination that is unique in Indian religion, and that explains the remarkable influence the poem still exercises over many types of the Indian mind. It is one of the three authoritative scriptures upon which each of the Vedāntic systems of philosophy—Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita, and Śuddhādvaita—claims to be based. That it is capable of being interpreted by each one of these diverse schools in a sense in

agreement with its own conceptions is nothing unusual in an Indian scripture. What is more remarkable as well as more significant for our present study is that it has at the same time, more than any other book, supplied nourishment for devout souls in India through the long period since first it was conceived until to-day. Not only do the philosophers base their systems upon it, but the poets expound it in the people's language, and even the Śaivites of the South draw much of their inspiration from this Vaiṣṇavite scripture.

Much controversy has gathered about the poem among modern scholars, even as among its commentators and interpreters at an earlier period. The question of its date, the question whether it has come to us in the form in which it was first written, or whether an original poem was later worked over and adapted to suit the views of another school of thought—these are questions upon which the students of this work are sharply divided. As to its date, it is sufficient for our purpose to recognize what will scarcely be denied from any authoritative quarter, that the Gītā is post-Buddhistic, and that at least a considerable part of it is pre-Christian. It has been maintained that traces of the influence of the Christian scriptures may be detected in the poem, but this is extremely problematical, and in any case would not conflict with the view that in its main outlines it was composed perhaps two centuries before the Christian era. On the further question of the process that has gone to the making of the book in its present form opinion is sharply divided. Whether it is a Viṣṇuite remodelling of a Pantheistic poem (Holtzmann), or a Kṛiṣṇaite version of an older Viṣṇuite poem, which in turn was 'a late Upaniṣad' (Hopkins), or a text-book of the Bhāgavatas revised in a Vedāntic sense by the Brāhmans (Garbe), or a late product of the degeneration of the monistic thought of the Upaniṣads representing the period of transition from Theism to realistic atheism (Deussen), can hardly, in the presence of such a conflict of opinions, be definitely determined. Leaving aside, however, the question

as to the process by which the *Gītā* reached its present form, there are certain facts in regard to it as now in our hands which may be affirmed with some confidence.

No doubt all or most of the Upaniṣads have undergone more or less revision and interpolation, and combine ideas that are not always easy to reconcile with one another. To maintain that the *Bhagavadgītā* is rightly to be described, as its commentators describe it, as an Upaniṣad, is not to deny that it, too, though it has more unity than most of its kind, may contain interpolations emphasizing the view of one school or another, or that it aims at comprehensiveness, and that its purpose consciously or unconsciously was irenical. In these respects it is not unique among the Upaniṣads. The *Śvetāśvatara*, for example, is, as Barth has pointed out, 'a sort of Śivaite *Bhagavadgītā*.'[1] Its policy of comprehension also is entirely in agreement with the whole Hindu tradition. We know, for example, how in later phases of Mahāyāna Buddhism there are to be found those who occupy a middle place between the simple adherents of the faith of devotion and the pure rationalists. 'Like the former they attach great importance to worship (*bhakti*) and to grace; like the latter they maintain the necessity of acquiring the divine knowledge and of practising meditation.'[2] In the *Gītā* we find that in similar fashion two streams have united. The more reflective and metaphysical religion of the older Upaniṣads has taken into itself the warmer and more living personal devotion that was widely prevalent among all classes of the people. That this was done with a deliberate, theological intent, the result of a pact between Brāhmans and non-Brāhmans as against the common Buddhist enemy, one need not suppose. Such artifices of the theologian or the ecclesiastic are not commonly effective in controlling the tides of religious life, nor are they likely to have produced a work so vital and so vitalizing as the *Bhagavadgītā* has shown itself to be. Rather we may believe that among those who breathed the speculative

[1] *R. I.*, p. 207 n. [2] Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 289.

atmosphere of the Upaniṣads were not a few who all the time rendered to one god or another the worship of their own private hearts. It was almost inevitable that the time would come when both the phases of their thought and life would be brought into relation, and *Brahman*, on whom 'the universe is woven like pearls upon a thread',[1] would be identified with that One near to men's need and to men's help who 'is born from age to age, to protect the good, to destroy the evil-doers, and to establish the Law'.[2] The fusion of the two conceptions may sometimes be incomplete, but it is the fact of their union in this poem, of its combination of a theory of the universe, which was the product of the best thought of India with the sentiment of devotion to a personal God and Saviour, that gives the *Gītā* the unique place it so long has held in the religious life of India.

It was, perhaps, almost inevitable that if there was a strain of Theism in the Upaniṣads it should presently coalesce with the most spiritual elements in the popular theistic faith. It was natural enough at the same time that this union should not be quite perfectly accomplished, and that a certain incongruity between philosophy and faith, between the anaemic *Brahman* and a Kṛiṣṇa who had but lately emerged from violent deeds and doubtful company, should discover itself. While it may very well be that the poem has been revised in the interests of one school or another, there is, after all, little in its inconsistency that requires for its explanation more than the coming together in the religion of the time of two theistic streams, the one reflective, the other predominatingly emotional, but both having their sources among the same hopes and longings of the heart. The inconsistencies and incongruities that seem plain to us were not so obvious to the more concrete reflection of that earlier age. We must remember that for all the subtlety of the thought of the Upaniṣads a haze hangs over it all. They partake of that indefiniteness which is inevitable in early thinking, seeing that it has not as yet clearly defined

[1] *Bhag.* VII. 7. [2] Ibid. IV. 8.

its own terms, nor is as yet fully aware of the significance of its own problems. And further, while the *Gītā* is unquestionably first and last a theistic poem, its Theism, like all the Theism of India throughout its history, looms forth from a mist of Pantheism, with many a pantheistic doctrine still clinging to its skirts. The consequence is a certain obscurity in its message, an obscurity which, perhaps, has assisted its popularity among a people always more attracted by what presents opportunities for the exercise of subtlety in interpretation than by utterances that give no uncertain sound and that by their authority constrain the conscience.

It would be a mistake to attempt to present in a completely systematic form the teaching of this poem. It represents a stage midway between the 'guesses at truth' of the earlier Upaniṣads and the fully articulated system of Śaṅkara and the other scholastics. In it we perceive the confluence of various streams of philosophic tendency, not yet definitely determined as irreconcilable. The *Gītā* can scarcely be described as a deliberate attempt to bring about a synthesis of these doctrines for the reason that they have not yet come to clear self-consciousness and their antagonism is not yet declared. But at the same time the fact that those various views, however fluid they as yet are, have been brought together into one in this poem, gives its doctrine with all its vagueness a more complete and systematic character than is possessed by any of the Upaniṣads. The central theological conception of the poem is one which, save for the use of such names for the Supreme Being or the Absolute as Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva might be found in the *Kāṭhaka* or the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. He is the all—at once the one 'seated at the heart of everything',[1] 'ruling and controlling from within' as well as, on a lower plane, the actual substance of the universe. Thus, in one aspect, God is presented as the *Brahman* of the older speculation, the *antaryāmin*, the immanent Being by whose life all things live and move. In the other its teaching

[1] XV. 15.

has affinities with the subsequently developed Sāṅkhya system, which, however, in this earlier, nebulous form is by no means atheistic. Perhaps the word *Sāṅkhya* is used as yet only in the sense of 'philosophy of religion'.[1] It unfortunately has proved not infrequently to be the case in the history of thought, that philosophy has attempted to dispense with God, and it is not surprising to find the Sāṅkhya, as it develops, adopting this attitude. No hint, however, of this later development is to be found in the *Gītā*. On the relation of matter and spirit the poem seems indeed at times to waver between competing views, as yet scarcely formulated; but always its religious pre-supposition, however it may be philosophically interpreted, is that spirit is supreme. The universe is strung together upon God, as pearls upon a thread.[2] But while so far the message of the *Gītā* does not materially differ from what we may claim to be the prevailing view of the relation of God to the universe that the Upaniṣads teach, it advances beyond them in a direction that is peculiarly significant. The influence upon the poem of the popular theistic faith is not seen merely in the appropriation of the name of Vāsudeva. It betrays itself, especially in the development of the Upaniṣad doctrine, so as to bring the immanent God upon whom the universe depends into personal relation with men, and so as to emphasize his grace on the one side and men's need of faith that they may come to him on the other.

No doubt the religious power of the *Bhagavadgītā* and its continuous influence over men's hearts in India to this day is to be explained mainly by the fact that, while it rests upon the Upaniṣads and accepts their teaching of a God who is the life and the indwelling glory of the universe, at the same time it passes beyond that cold conclusion to reveal him at the same time as a Saviour, near to men's need, and responding in his grace to the cry of their faith. Kṛiṣṇa, the charioteer of Arjuna, and the spokesman of the poem, is the remote One, so

[1] Hopkins, *R. I.*, p. 391. [2] VII. 7.

'very hard to find' but now come near and manifesting himself. At the call of human need he 'is born from age to age'.[1] To those who are ever devout and worship him with love he gives the attainment of the knowledge by which they come to him.[2] He serves men according as they approach him;[3] and the best of all ways by which he is approached is that of love and 'undivided devotion' (*bhakti*).[4] In passages such as these the *Gītā* reaches its highest religious expression and discovers the source of its great power over the Indian heart. It cannot indeed be maintained that it is always consistent in this view of the supremacy of faith and devotion. Sometimes the intellectual tradition reasserts itself, and to the 'man of knowledge' is given the highest place.[5] But on the whole this is not the case. The poem is throughout suffused with a glow of emotion which, united with the ancient and profound conception of the divine immanence in all things, has enabled it to appeal with power during so many centuries at once to the heart and to the reason of India.

In the *Bhagavadgītā*, as in every attempt in India to reach a genuinely theistic system, the problem inevitably arises of the reconciliation of a doctrine of a personal God with what seems to have come to be recognized in India as the axiom of *karma*. We have seen already that under Buddhist influences this system was to some extent moralized and its mechanical inexorableness modified. Similar influences are at work in the *Gītā*. The influence of the thought of the last hour in determining destiny is recognized even as it is in Buddhism.[6] The doctrines of grace and of reprobation, the exercise by the Supreme Lord of his *māyā* in order to save men[7] or to bewilder and destroy them,[8] are really means by which the antinomy of the free moral activity of God and the fatal power of the 'deed' is sought to be reconciled. Along with the

[1] IV. 8. [2] X. 10. [3] IV. 11.
[4] VIII. 22; VII. 17. [5] VII. 16 ff.
[6] *Gītā*, VIII. 5; cf. *Majjhima*, I, p. 26; Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 69.
[7] IV. 6. [8] VII. 15, 25.

gracious condescension of God, electing to salvation and coming Himself to save, goes naturally the response of human faith and love. Hopkins believes the doctrine of grace on the part of God to be older than that of *bhakti* issuing from the heart of the worshipper.[1] But while it may well be that he is right in tracing the former back to Vedic times, the complementary conception of man as resting in love and trust upon a God who manifests His grace may also be, and we can hardly believe not to have been, quite as old. It is indeed the strange and stubborn doctrine of transmigration in conjunction with that of the power of *karma* that continually acts throughout all the religious history of India as an influence quenching the natural human instinct that trusts in God's goodness and expects His grace.

We find in another place in the *Mahābhārata*, as well as in the *Gītā* episode, this doctrine of special grace discussed, and there it appears in a setting which shows how the *karma* doctrine was provoking serious conflicts of opinion. In this passage, which is believed to belong to an old stratum of the Epic, the justice of divine election and reprobation is challenged. In the spirit of the book of Job, God is accused and the question raised of His relation, equally with men, to the law of *karma*. The answer that is suggested there is the same as that which is set forth with much elaboration in the *Bhagavadgītā*. The freedom of God in relation to the bondage of the 'deed' is secured by the great ethical conception that work done with no desire for reward brings no entanglement. Works do not fetter the soul, if they have no selfish aim; nor do God's works therefore fetter Him. 'There is no virtue', as is said in connexion with the similar discussion elsewhere in the Epic to which we have just referred, 'in trying to milk virtue.'[2] In this respect also there is a close affinity between Buddhism and the teaching of the *Gītā*. Self-emptying is, no doubt, only half-way towards love, but it is at least half-way, and the ardent spirit of the Vaiṣṇavite worship was able

[1] Hopkins, *R.I.*, p. 429. [2] Ibid., p. 386.

sometimes at least to read a positive content into the negation and so to turn philosophy into a real religion and a life of asceticism into what might be a life of noble service. In this way, '*Brahman* who is the deed of sacrifice'[1] and who is therefore at least above the bondage of the world of *saṃsāra*, is transformed to the more attractive semblance of Kṛiṣṇa, 'the sacrifice, . . . the refuge, the friend'[2] who gives himself to men for their salvation.

We have said that in the *Gītā* is to be found one of the very loftiest utterances of the Hindu religious spirit. What above all other things characterizes Hinduism in its most adequate expressions throughout the whole course of its long history is its exaltation of the spirit and its contempt for the things of sense. It is not the old, cast-off clothes that matter, but 'the unborn, everlasting, unchangeable, and primaeval, that is not killed when the body is killed'.[3] That note rings clear and resonant through the poem as through the Upaniṣads that precede it. But the inspiring vision of triumphant Spirit in most cases loses all its power by reason of the dark background of *karma* and *saṃsāra* or transmigration against which to Indian thought it always stands. In such a setting its splendour pales and fades. It seems as if the intractable materialism of the transmigration theory as well as of the *karma* doctrine in its cruder forms was always frustrating of its proper fruitfulness the deep spiritual intuitions of the Hindu. It is possible for him, however, to burst even those bonds asunder and to give expression with some freedom and adequacy—as in the *Gītā* and also in some of the utterances of later Buddhism—to his religious instincts, when to the thought of the divine Soul of all things, beside whom nothing else is at all—or in the case of Buddhism, to the thought of the divine Law—he unites that of the grace of a transcendent Lord who saves, and that at the same time of the faith of man's unconquerable heart that lifts him up to God. As in this poem, so also in the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*,

[1] IV. 24. [2] IX. 16, 18. [3] II. 20.

a high level of practical religion is reached, just because those doctrines of grace and faith modify the *karma* doctrine and render it tractable and tolerable. Without them the old Buddhism and the old Vedānta scheme of deliverance were only beautiful dreams that could visit none but monks in their monastery or ascetics in the desert. In this Mahāyāna scripture we find Aśvaghoṣa engaged in many of the same tasks as occupy the author of the *Bhagavadgītā*. He endeavours to give a philosophic basis to the popular polytheisms that threatened to overwhelm the older Buddhism and yet at the same time to conserve the spirit of the ancient teaching. To him as to the Hindu thinker a way must needs be found by which the law of *karma* and the law of faith can be related and reconciled. By means of 'reverential feelings towards the Triple Treasure (*triratna*)', 'through the protection of the majestic power of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, one's *karma* hindrances (*karmāvaraṇa*) will get purified and one's root of merit firmly established'.[1] 'Gradually entering the *samādhi* of suchness, he will finally vanquish all prejudices (*kleśa* or *āśrava*), be strengthened in faith (*śraddhā*), and immediately attain to the state of never-returning (*avaivartikatva*).'[2] There is not only faith here but grace, the grace that protects and helps and the grace also that descends. For the Bodhisattva 'descends from the palace in the Tuṣita heaven (to this world) and enters into the human womb'.[3] *Bhūtatathatā*, which is translated 'suchness' by Suzuki, is the highest reality, so that 'the *samādhi* of suchness' in the passage quoted above is the attainment of such a reality. The practical aspect of this doctrine corresponds to the *Gītā* doctrine of non-attachment to action.[4] So closely alike are those two scriptures, the one arising in a Hindu and the other in a Buddhist environment, in their conception of the way of deliverance from the bonds that both religions believed to bind men in so grievous a bondage. The task of deliverance

[1] Suzuki, p. 118.
[2] Ibid., p. 135.
[3] Ibid., pp. 119 f.
[4] Ibid., p. 94 note.

needed a personal saviour; it needed faith in one who was an embodiment of infinite love (*karuṇā*) and infinite wisdom (*jñāna*). 'I lift them speedily', says Kṛṣṇa of the *Gītā*, expressing the same thought, 'from the ocean of deadly *saṃsāra*, as their mind is set on me.'[1] He whose mind is set on Kṛṣṇa comes to him. He who 'with concentration of thought' thinks of Amitābha Buddha passes to a region where he always 'sees Buddha'.[2]

These are among the basal ideas of Theism, and it is no surprise to find them expressed in two scriptures that have been described as the New Testaments of Hinduism and of Buddhism.[3] That fact goes far to explain the remarkable influence that those two works have exercised over the hearts of men, the one in India, and the other, now that Buddhism is an outcast from the country of its birth, in the lands of its adoption in the further east. It was no chance coincidence that, about the time when the foundations of Christian Theism were being laid by life and word in Galilee and in Judea, the very thoughts there in Christ incarnated were beginning in imperfect fashion to be conceived within the minds, and to lay their grasp upon the hearts, of Hindu and of Buddhist seers.

[1] *Bhagavadgītā*, XII. 7.

[2] The word may here be either singular or plural.

[3] Compare also what Poussin says of other parallelisms:—'The relation between *Brahman* and transfigured Kṛṣṇa is not unlike the relation between *dharmakāya* and *saṃbhoga*. And again the third body of Buddha . . . has something in common with the human and "unnatural" form of Kṛṣṇa.' *J. R. A. S.*, 1906, p. 961.

VI

THEISM DURING THE *MAHĀBHĀRATA* PERIOD

WITH the appearance of the *Bhagavadgītā*, Indian Theism has advanced to a new level of significance, and occupies a position of authority not hitherto attained. For while still, as a genuine Theism must, keeping its hold upon the people's hearts and demanding their devotion, it at the same time attempts to vindicate itself as a speculative system; it endeavours to relate the worship of the simple to the wisdom of the philosopher. The popular devotion to Bhagavat, for long, in all probability, a pious tradition among earnest souls, now obtained a new sanction and a new importance. The genius of the unknown author of this poem, or perhaps we should rather say, the religious and philosophic power present in the syncretistic movement of which this poem is the expression, lifts it out of the category, to which it properly belongs, of sectarian literature. In the *Mahābhārata*, into which it has been inserted as an episode, it really forms one of many documents exalting Viṣṇu-Kṛiṣṇa and his worship that are placed in this great encyclopaedia of early Hinduism, side by side with similar documents exalting Śiva and his cult. We have now definitely passed beyond the anonymous speculations and intuitions of the Upaniṣads to the rivalries of the Hindu sects. For one fortunate moment reflection and the spirit of devotion unite in the *Gītā* in harmonious union. The coldness of the Upaniṣads is warmed by the glow of a pious ardour, while the exuberance of popular fancy is restrained from mythological excesses. At times, indeed, in the poem this equilibrium is lost, and we have now the pedantry of the scholastic, and again, fantastic nightmares of the popular

imagination. In sectarianism, outside of this exceptional expression of it, there is little to restrain the exuberance of the mythopoeic faculty. It is only in the case of exceptional individuals like the Buddha and the unknown author of the *Gītā* that spiritual fervour will be combined with imaginative austerity, and the native hue of devotion not sicklied over by the pale cast of thought. For the most part, as we see them in the 'jungle of the *Mahābhārata*', the sectarian religions are all overgrown with the rank vegetation of popular mythology among which the simplicities of Theism are hard indeed to trace.

How far the one or the other of the two great rival deities and the one or the other of the powerful sects that gather round them predominated during the period of the *Mahābhārata*, or may be said to predominate in the poem itself, can hardly be definitely decided. The Epic, in the opinion of Hopkins, who has given so much study to this treasure-house of Indian religious lore, stretches its unwieldy bulk over a period of at least eight centuries, extending perhaps from the fifth century before Christ to the fifth century after Christ. Throughout the whole of that period these rival sects no doubt exercised an influence that was greater over some classes than over others, and in some areas than in others. Anything more definite than that as regards their relations and their relative importance can scarcely be conjectured with any certainty.

There is, indeed, a third god, Brahmā, who has certain claims to that pre-eminence which is more actively demanded on behalf of the other two deities who, along with him, were at a later period grouped into a trinity. But his adherents were not, it would appear, so numerous or so aggressive on his behalf as were those of Viṣṇu and of Śiva. No doubt, as the fully personalized Brahman of the Upaniṣad philosophy, he had a prestige among a certain class that the others did not have. But that was of little value compared with the popular ardour which characterized the worship of the other gods. The high place once accorded to Brahmā was little

more by that time than a tradition—a survival. Later, when the attempt is made to adjust their quarrels for supremacy by means of a hierarchy of gods, he has his place assigned to him as one of the first three, but in reality he never disputes for a moment the first place with his two great rivals, nor does he seem to have done so at this earlier period. We may go so far as to say that Indian religion was at this time divided into two camps, each with its own religious characteristics, and each claiming for its favourite deity the first or even the sole place in the godhead.

The impartiality with which the Epic divides its favours between the two popular deities, applying to each alternately identical epithets of supremacy, is only explicable on the supposition that each sect was able to secure the insertion of documents corresponding to those of its rival. Evidently they possessed almost equal authority and prestige, so that equality of recognition could be accorded them. Both Viṣṇu and Śiva are *devadeva*, *par excellence*, while only once or twice is such a title given to any other god; both are *devādhideva*. That in the course of the development of the religious consciousness, such a struggle for the first place between rival modes of representing and approaching God should take place in India as in other countries, was inevitable perhaps, but there are certain characteristics of the thought of India that differentiate the process, as we discover it there, from what is to be found elsewhere. It was only later, for example, as has been already indicated, that the attempt, which appears in a fully developed form among the Greeks and Romans with their strong sense of order and government, was made to adjust the claims of rival deities by federating them. The instinct of the Indian spirit with its decided pantheistic bias is rather to amalgamate and blend its gods—to encourage one as the 'All-god' to swallow the others. Neither Viṣṇu, Śiva, nor Brahmā has a personality so clearly outlined, or lineaments so distinct that it is impossible for one to dissolve into the other. At one time it is said, 'I am

Viṣṇu, I am Brahmā, I am Śiva';[1] and, again, a hymn is addressed 'to Śiva having the form of Viṣṇu, to Viṣṇu having the form of Śiva'.[2] All the gods are minor manifestations of one or other in turn. We find here in active operation the struggle which in one fashion or another is present throughout the whole of the Indian religious development, and differentiates it from every other similar development of which we have any record. It is a struggle between what we may call the natural Theism of the devout spirit on the one hand, with its demand for a personalized worship, and certain physical or metaphysical presuppositions on the other, which, whether we suppose them to be indelible characteristics of Indian mentality, or doctrines which have come to be accepted there as axioms, seem always to control the Indian point of view. The belief in transmigration in combination with an incurable instinct to seek a monistic solution of the universe, contends with the demand of the devout heart for a God with whom it can have fellowship. The result almost always is either that this devout desire is quenched in hopelessness by the thought of the endless revolutions of the inevitable wheel of birth, or that, alternatively, the object of worship being submerged in the ocean of the All, the fervour of personal affection becomes impossible. This conflict can be discerned in process among the doubtful shadows of the *Mahābhārata* jungle.

The struggle throughout the Epic, as throughout the whole of Indian religious history, inclines now to one side and now to another, but on the whole those forces are strongest that are arrayed in opposition to that spirit of devotion which seeks a personal object for its worship. This is shown by the importance of Yoga practices in the Epic, and by the recourse so often had to *mantras*, and what is no better than magic. The paralysing effect upon religion of the *karma* doctrine is seen in these relapses into superstition and in the indications of the appearance of a spirit of scepticism. It is no surprise to find the conclusion—'Time and fate and what will be—this

[1] *Mbh.* III. 189. 5 f. [2] *Mbh.* III. 39. 76.

is the only Lord.'[1] In these respects the *Mahābhārata* is an accurate reflection, no doubt, of Hinduism as it existed in all its variety, and with all its contradictions throughout, perhaps, five hundred years. Some of its best characteristics, as well as some of its worst, are to be found in the types of worship that connect themselves with the names of Viṣṇu and of Śiva. As between those two great sects there is a difference which gives to the one rather than to the other a bias towards Theism. The Viṣṇuite cult, by the association of its god with Kṛiṣṇa as Viṣṇu's incarnation, is able to emphasize the personal characteristics of the object of its worship, and so to resist more successfully the prevailing Pantheism. 'It is with the philosopher's Viṣṇu', says Hopkins, 'that Kṛiṣṇa is identified.' Philosophy had done much, no doubt, for the old Vedic sun-god, purifying and dignifying his figure, setting it far apart from his bloody counterpart, Śiva, so manifestly begotten of demonic fears. Philosophy had done much for Viṣṇu, and it was all the easier for that reason for the worship of the devout to attach itself to him, all the more so as attributes of help and condescension had been his from the earliest times. But his figure needed to be humanized and brought near to men, and that was accomplished when the popular Kṛiṣṇa was linked up with him as his *avatāra*, his 'descent' or incarnation. Throughout the *Mahābhārata* we recognize that the strength and energy of the Vaiṣṇavite sect is due to the name and fame of Kṛiṣṇa, while his prestige and his authority are furnished by the ancient Vedic deity. The combination is a peculiarly strong one, and has secured for this sect a powerful and continuous theistic tradition throughout the whole of the subsequent course of the Hindu development.

It is true that the relation of Kṛiṣṇa and Viṣṇu is not yet in the Epic clearly defined. The *avatāra* idea, in one crude form or another, was an old one, but its application to the purpose of reconciling the discordant claims of rival gods was

[1] *Mbh.* III. 273. 6; Hopkins, *R. I.*, p. 386. M. N. Dutt (III. 272. 6) interprets the passage differently.

new. The Indian mind has always found it easy to identify the remoter gods with one another. Varuṇa, Soma, Indra, Aryaman—no one had any very vital interest in those old deities as independent personalities. It was no difficult matter to dissolve them into one another. But this was not the case with the gods of the popular worship. Kṛiṣṇa and Rāma—and even Śiva, as the people knew and worshipped him, and before the philosophers had begun to take him in hand—were too definite in their characteristics, and too near to the unreflective multitude to be so manipulated. Simple devotion could be content to worship Kṛiṣṇa as supreme—or it might be Śiva—and ignore the rest. Love—or, more likely, in the case of the latter, fear—could behold its object so close at hand and so exalted that all others become remote and shadowy. But, presently, when the mood of spiritual exaltation had passed, the sky filled again with a crowd of competing deities. A simple plan in such a difficulty, and one that always has commended itself to many, was to glorify one's own god and to decry his rivals—to reduce them in more or less express terms to the rank of demi-gods or even demons. So when Kṛiṣṇa is exalted, it is said of him that 'Brahmā was born from his lotus-navel, and Śiva sprang from his angry forehead'.[1] It may even be that some super-sectarian among them relegates the whole company of the common gods, Viṣṇu himself along with the rest, to the second rank in the presence of an anonymous Supreme before whom the gods themselves bow down. 'The sages say to Viṣṇu, "All men worship thee; to whom dost thou offer worship?" And he says, "To the Eternal Spirit".'[2] Or, again, the peculiar characteristics of the Indian mind assert themselves in the resolute endeavour to digest even these stubborn personalities, and dissolve them into one another, and to identify Kṛiṣṇa himself with his terrible rival.[3] Or, yet again, the universe is

[1] *Mbh.* III. 12. 37 f.; Hopkins, *R. I.*, p. 411.
[2] *Mbh.* XII. 335. 26 ff.; Hopkins, *R. I.*, p. 413.
[3] *Mbh.* III. 12. 21, 43.

divided into spheres of influence, and Brahmā the creator, Kṛiṣṇa the protector, and Śiva the destroyer 'are the three appearances or conditions (*avasthā*) of the Father-god '.[1] But no method of linking up the gods is so satisfying at once to the philosopher and to the devout worshipper as is that of *avatāras*, by means of which the rivalries of the popular Theisms were reconciled, while in the persons of Kṛiṣṇa and Rāma and the others that followed them, 'Viṣṇuism found its true divinities'.[2] We have not yet reached the fully reflective period of Indian religion. The philosophers of the Upaniṣad age were not system builders. They are to Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja as Xenophanes and Anaxagoras are to Aristotle and Plotinus. But, as in the Upaniṣads, so in the *Mahābhārata* and in the Purāṇas, materials for the systems to come, tentative theologizings are to be found, and the fruitful idea embodied in the theory of *avatāras* was never lost sight of. The idea of 'descents', bringing a remote God near to man, is in full agreement with those mystical conceptions of the divine that had become associated with the name of Viṣṇu. At the same time, the abstractions of the older mysticism were, by the help of the human figures of Kṛiṣṇa and the rest, rendered concrete and vivid and powerful, so as to be able to attract the heart of the common man, whether devout, or superstitious, or sensual, or all three at once. In the *Mahābhārata* period the philosophical and theological possibilities of the *avatāra* idea have not yet become explicit. It has not yet passed decisively beyond the stage of mythology. But at last a means has been found by the help of which a new stream of faith and passion, fed from sources where the sensual and the spiritual mingle undistinguished, could be poured into the old river-bed, now wellnigh dry, of philosophic Viṣṇuism.

A natural accompaniment of the doctrine of *avatāras*, bringing as it does a remote god near to men in gracious condescension, is the belief, not altogether new, but by this

[1] Hopkins, *R. I.*, p. 412 ; *Mbh.* III. 271 (272). 47.
[2] Barth, *R. I.*, p. 172.

doctrine made more credible and real, of the grace of God in man's salvation. The theistic Upaniṣads had spoken, as we have seen, of the Self as manifesting itself of its own (or his own) good pleasure. 'He whom the Self chooses, that one obtains it.'[1] The same thought is vitally related to the view of Kṛiṣṇa in his relations with men that finds its expression in the *Bhagavadgītā*,[2] while the idea is at least latent in much that is included within the Buddhist system. The doctrine in one form or another of the grace that manifests itself, that condescends to human weakness, that has pity and saves, is, no doubt, an ancient one, as old as the immemorial convictions that God is good and that man is weak and ignorant and sinful. In the *Mahābhārata* the way of salvation is especially to be attained by means of the divine grace, but that is not, as in the Upaniṣads, the grace of the anonymous Self, but the grace of Kṛiṣṇa who is human and near. 'That man to whom he gives his grace (*prasāda*) can behold him.'[3] Not the knowledge of the atheist or of the pantheist but the personal help of a personal saviour is the means of man's deliverance.

Throughout the whole of the *Mahābhārata*, and, no doubt, throughout the whole period across which it stretches, one finds an almost inextricable confusion of speculations and counter-speculations, sectarian dogmas, mythology and mystic interpretations of mythology. The power of thought and the activity of a grossly superstitious fancy, combined with the pantheistic instinct for unity, are continuously at work with results that baffle and bewilder. We have seen how, in the case of the *Bhagavadgītā*, Theism and Pantheism alternate in their expression in the poem so as to make it a matter of considerable difficulty to determine what doctrine is really intended to be taught. So throughout the entire Epic the Theism that had been strengthened within the circle of Viṣṇu worship by the reinforcement of the name of Kṛiṣṇa and the popular devotion that attached to him, appears again

[1] *Kaṭha Up.* II. 23. [2] XI. 53.
[3] *Mbh.* XII. 337. 20.

and again to be almost overwhelmed by the tide of that philosophic Pantheism which was associated with the name of the older Vedic deity. A non-pantheistic element in the poem and one distinct—as far as one thing can be said to be distinct from another in the Indian religious atmosphere—from the devout Kṛṣṇa cult, is that which is associated with the name Yoga. This was, to begin with, a system closely related to the practices of magic, which, by means of certain exercises, sought to obtain for the adept, supernatural powers. With the lapse of time the aim it set before itself and the methods it employed were refined to something less primitive and crude. Following the example practically universal in India, it came to recognize deliverance from repeated birth as the one object whose attainment was worth seeking. Its method likewise was modified till it became mainly one of concentration and of ecstasy. It was thoroughly practical in its purpose and had no speculative interests. Just as the philosopher might in his own religious life be a *Bhagavadbhakta*, 'a devout worshipper of the Lord', so he might also quite possibly follow the practices of the Yoga and use them as auxiliaries for the attainment of his goal. But in general the Yoga implied a belief in a personal God—though his rôle might seem a somewhat superfluous one—and stood in sharp contrast in that respect with the atheistic system of the Sāṅkhya. It implied such a belief just because it was a practical scheme of deliverance, while the other was a theory of things. 'There is no knowledge like the Sāṅkhya—no power like the Yoga,'[1] says one of the reconcilers who are so common in the later Epic. The statement indicates how the complementary character of the two systems could render their amalgamation possible. There was far less difficulty in forming an alliance between deistic Yoga and theistic *bhakti*. The aim of Yoga, is, no doubt, different from that of a doctrine inspired by personal devotion and aspiring to personal fellowship with God. It seeks to withdraw the soul into its eternal isolation

[1] *Mbh.* XII. 317. 2; Hopkins, *Great Epic*, p. 102.

(*kevalatva*), so that it may be 'released from birth and death, ill and weal',[1] or even so that it may there 'shine glorious like a king'.[2] But if it was possible to combine this with a doctrine of absorption into unconditioned *Brahman*, it was certainly no less possible and more in accordance with the whole Yoga tradition to seek an alliance rather with the Kṛiṣṇa sect. There were certain respects in which the two were sharply antagonistic to each other. Especially the idea at the root of Yoga, as of so much else in the Indian view of life, the idea of relation as implying bondage, of the profitable way as necessarily a *via negativa*, of the best life as a life of asceticism, was deeply and inevitably opposed to the doctrine of loving faith in a personal God. The one breaks bonds where the other knits them. The one seeks a goal of separation, the other a goal of union. The latter worships a God whose hand is upon the world as Creator and upon man's heart as Saviour. To the former it must always be a problem to conceive of a God as related and so bound to the world that he has created and to man who seeks deliverance.[3] The shallow speculations of the twelfth book of the *Mahābhārata* are not sufficient to secure the reconciliation of philosophy and devotion. A deeper synthesis was required to unite them and to give the popular Theism a more secure position. The *avatāra* doctrine had helped greatly to establish the respectability of its connexions, but the danger remained lest it should be speedily absorbed by the prevailing Pantheism. To avoid that danger a method was required more serious and less shallow than the easy compromises of the later *Mahābhārata*.

[1] Hopkins, *Great Epic*, p. 110.
[2] *Mbh.* VII. 71. 17; Hopkins, *Great Epic*, p. 185.
[3] Cf. *Mbh.* XII. 341. 99, 'The Lord created *pravṛitti* as a picturesque effect' (Hopkins, *Great Epic*, p. 103).

VII

THE THEISM OF THE *VEDĀNTA SŪTRAS* AND OF RĀMĀNUJA

THE *Mahābhārata* may be taken as representative of the religious life of the greater part of northern India, not only up to the end of the fourth century of the Christian era, by which time the poem may be reckoned to have assumed its final form, but for many centuries thereafter. Buddhism is, indeed, ignored by it, though there are many traces of its influence; and to complete the picture of Indian religion through this long, dim period, one has to conceive of it also in all its variety of aspects, rising to power and, later, falling into decay. Popular cults of devotion, such as the *Mahābhārata* reveals—cults tracing their descent from the Bhāgavatas and the Pāñcarātras and adoring Kṛiṣṇa and Rāma and other human gods, maintained their power still over the hearts of many of the people. Even within Buddhism the flame of Theism burned on unextinguished. Attempts, too, such as the later books of the *Mahābhārata* contain, to fashion a metaphysical framework for the popular Theisms, continued, no doubt, to be made. Pioneers of the system-makers to come endeavoured with more or less success to steer their philosophic course between the Scylla of Sāṅkhya atheism and the Charybdis of Brahmaism.

Of all the theological and philosophical works, however, produced in this long period, by far the most authoritative was that which contained the *Vedānta* or *Brahma Sūtras*. At some time early in the Christian era, which cannot be more particularly determined, this work was elaborated, exhibiting the new spirit of scholasticism which was taking

the place of the free and more living speculation of the Upaniṣads. The formulation of Sūtras in different departments of religious practice and speculation was significant of the stage that had now been reached in the Hindu development. Their appearance marks the conclusion of the literature of revelation. Śruti is now at an end—no voice of divine inspiration can any longer be heard. It remains to codify the truths received, and this is the aim and purpose of the *Sūtras*. The *Vedānta Sūtras*, which, if we accept the tradition, belong to a later period than the *Bhagavadgītā*,[1] sum up Vedic speculation or what is called *Uttara Mīmāṃsā*. The *jñāna kāṇḍa* or theory of the universe, which is here set forth with a conciseness that renders it scarcely intelligible, was revealed in the Upaniṣads; and, if indeed these scriptures are faithfully reproduced and systematized in this scholastic treatise, it will be theistic or non-theistic according as the orthodox tradition interpreted the originals in the one sense or the other. The Sūtras, accordingly, ought to be decisive as to whether the Vedānta is or is not a theistic system. Unfortunately, however, if the question is debatable in regard to the Upaniṣads themselves, the Sūtras give little help in coming to a decision. The 'almost algebraic mode of expression',[2] to which in their zeal for compression the authors of this class of literature attained, renders it impossible to decide with certainty what view they set forth, and leaves at least as much scope for the commentator and the controversialist as the original Śruti itself. For a long period, accordingly, we have to choose, in forming an opinion of the Indian religious development, between the complex of a multitude of worships which such a poem as the *Mahābhārata* presents to us, and the ambiguity and obscurity of the philosophers and theologians. Through the shadows we can dimly see Hinduism organizing itself with a view to overcoming or absorbing its rivals, Buddhism

[1] IV. ii. 21 of the *Vedānta Sūtras* is supposed by the commentators to refer to the *Gītā*.

[2] Macdonell's *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 35.

and Jainism, and succeeding in its aim; we can see Muḥammadanism descending upon the land and bringing confusion and ferment. The whole period has aspects of similarity in the history of Hinduism to the 'dark ages' of Mediaevalism in the history of the Christian Church, and what Thomas Aquinas and the great schoolmen were in the one development Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja were in the other.

When we come to these names we find ourselves for the first time in Southern India, and realize that through those ambiguous centuries Hinduism was engaged in absorbing new peoples and steadily extending her sway. As Buddhism and Jainism arose outside the 'holy land' of Aryan orthodoxy, so those two personalities, whose appearance marks a new era in Indian religious reflection, belong to a new land where thought can be active and untrammelled. Whether Śaṅkara contributed ideas of his own to his presentation of the old teaching, or whether he was merely a brilliant interpreter, it is not easy now to determine, but at all events this man of the South, who was not even, it is alleged, a pure Brāhman, possessed an intellectual power and an audacity of speculation such as are likeliest to be found—not where the springs of life and thought are beginning to fail, but where they are welling up, vigorous and new. But it is not with Śaṅkara that this investigation has to do. If his account of the meaning of the Sūtras is accepted, then their doctrine must be acknowledged to be completely anti-theistic, and, presumably, the Vedānta also that they claim to summarize. Theism can find no place in a system of such absolute and unflinching monism as this is, which makes self-consciousness an illusion, and to the sole existent Being denies all attributes whatever. If a place is found on a lower plane for Īśvara as the creation of the empiric mind and useful for practical purposes, all the time he is recognized by the wise man as unreal. Theism, of course, cannot recognize this pinchbeck deity. Such a device is far more fraudulent than the pragmatism which we found exercising so great an influence over Buddhist thought. Buddha

said, ‘Problems which are of no avail to salvation I do not solve.’ He did not say, ‘Believe for practical ends what all the time is metaphysically false.’ To refuse to face ultimate problems, and to limit one's stock of ideas to working hypotheses or ‘necessary knowledge’, may not be a heroic course to follow, but it is essentially different from the deliberate acceptance, for the satisfaction of the understanding and the heart, of a view of the world which the reason all the time declares to be untrue. Śaṅkara's *aparā vidyā* opens the door, as it was intended no doubt to do, not only to theistic religion but to every form of superstition and idolatry. It is perhaps a corollary of Pantheism to recognize and accept things as they are to the empiric consciousness, and, therefore, ‘the god of things as they are’. An ethical Theism cannot build on such phenomenal foundations.

The system of Rāmānuja is, on the other hand, a serious Theism, nowhere—as Śaṅkara's to the plain man seems to be—‘stanchioned with a lie’. Though the founder of this school, which has exercised so notable an influence in the development of Vaiṣṇavite religion, lived three centuries after Śaṅkara, there is evidence that his views rested upon an old and influential tradition. He was not the first to attempt to formulate in systematic form the doctrines of the Bhāgavata or Pāñcarātra faith. In the *Mahābhārata* the four-fold manifestation of the Supreme Being—one of its distinctive tenets—is mentioned, while a similar reference in the *Vedānta Sūtras* indicates that the theology of this ancient system, whether approved by the Sūtrakāra or not—and this is a matter of controversy—was recognized and treated with respect in the highest quarters.[1] If any reliance is to be placed upon the South Indian tradition in this matter, it would appear that Vaiṣṇavism had a continuous history there almost from the beginning of the Christian era. There is said to have been a succession of twelve Vaiṣṇavite saints, called Āḷvārs, and a similar series of Ācāryas, of whom six

[1] *S.B.E.* XXXIV, p. xxiii.

are named as preceding Rāmānuja. One of these is Yāmunācārya, who is said to have been Rāmānuja's immediate predecessor in this apostolic succession of Vaiṣṇavism. Several of his works have survived. One of them, the *Siddhi-traya*, is said to have for its object the demonstration of the real existence of the individual soul and the refutation of the doctrine of *avidyā*, while another, the *Āgamaprāmaṇya*, attacks the view that the *Sūtras* condemn the Bhāgavata teaching, and maintains the orthodoxy of that teaching.[1] Another work of a different character attributed to this spiritual ancestor of Rāmānuja is the *Stotra Ratna*, a brief devotional poem, dedicated to Viṣṇu. Its spirit of earnest piety may be taken as indicative of the real religious value of this Vaiṣṇavism of the South. The emotion of which Rāmānuja was to furnish the intellectual expression, utters itself with unmistakable earnestness in such a cry as this:—

> The vessel of a thousand sins, and plunged
> Deep in the heart of life's outrageous sea,
> I seek in Thee the refuge of despair;
> In mercy only, Hari, make me Thine. . . .
> But for Thee I am masterless; save me
> There's none to earn Thy mercy. Since our fate
> Weaveth this bond between us, Master mine,
> O guard it well and cast it not away. . . .
> Lord Mādhava, whatever mine may be,
> Whatever I, is all and wholly Thine.
> What offering can I bring, whose wakened soul
> Seeth all Being bond to Thee for aye?[2]

There is little doubt that when Rāmānuja arose in the eleventh or twelfth century,[3] Vaiṣṇavism had had a long

[1] See *The Vaiṣṇavite Reformers of India*, by T. Rajagopala Chariar. The author in his sketch of Yāmunācārya quotes from the *Siddhi-traya*, which, he says, is frequently quoted by Rāmānuja, this passage:—'The individual soul is a separate entity in each body which is by nature eternal, subtle, and blissful. It is distinct from the body, the senses, the vital air, and the intellect, and is self-contained' (the word he translates 'self-contained' is *svataḥ*). He also quotes a passage controverting the *advaita* explanation of '*ekam evādvitīyam*', pp. 37, 35.

[2] L. D. Barnett's translation in *Heart of India*, p. 42.

[3] The date of his death is usually given as 1137, and he is alleged to have lived for 120 years.

history, and had established for itself a strong position in South India, though it is there that the worship of Śiva has always had its chief stronghold. He was born at Śrīperumbudur, near Madras, and appears to have resided and taught chiefly at Śrīraṅgam, near Trichinopoly, where he is said to have written his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras*, the *Śrī Bhāṣya*. Certain characteristics of the religious practice—as distinguished from the theory—of the Vaiṣṇavism of which he is the most distinguished representative deserve to be noted, especially as they are such as we have already seen to accompany a genuine Theism. For one thing it seems to have appealed to the common people, and to have won them largely to its worship. This was, of course, natural in a religion which emphasized devotion rendered to a personal God, and thereby, in a measure at least, opposed itself to the more aristocratic and exclusive 'way of knowledge'. If the followers of Rāmānuja, like so many other of the Vaiṣṇavite cults, found the power of caste too great for them to overcome, they, nevertheless, opened the way of salvation to the lower classes no less than to the higher. The same democratic spirit, which, indeed, must accompany every message which is in any real sense evangelic and theistic, is shown in the adoption of the practice of using the Tamil works of the Āḷvārs in connexion with the service of their temples. There is also a story related of Rāmānuja, which may well have a true tradition behind it, and is significant of the implications of the Vaiṣṇavite religion. It is said that a famous *guru* of the time conveyed to Rāmānuja under the customary pledge of secrecy his esoteric doctrine. Having learned it, however, Rāmānuja, believing it to be a message of salvation which all should learn, promptly broke his promise, and proceeded to proclaim it to all about him.[1] Another characteristic of this Vaiṣṇavism which marks it off from most other sects in India is its religious exclusiveness. The Indian pantheistic mind has always been too ready to extend an easy tolerance to

[1] *Śrī Rāmānuja*, by S. Krisnaswami Ayengar, p. 17.

every form of faith, and to believe that every god is but one form or another of the nameless One. It was certainly possible for the Advaita doctrine to encourage, though it might despise, all varieties of superstition as portions—harmless, perhaps, or even useful, portions—of the cosmic illusion. But this course was not open to Rāmānuja and those who held with him to faith in a real personal deity. There is a movement towards monotheism, such as India seldom betrays, in the refusal on the part of those who follow Rāmānuja, to recognize the worship of any other gods than those of the Vaiṣṇavite pantheon. The absence from the religion of India of the intolerance, and what we may almost call the monotheistic arrogance, of the Hebrew prophets, is due more than anything else to the pantheistic root of so much of the thought of India and its consequent half-heartedness in affirming the divine unity. Rāmānuja, perhaps, more than any one since the Vedic Varuṇa was worshipped, seems to have been possessed of this peculiarly Semitic conviction.

Not only does Rāmānuja belong to an ancient and strongly defined religious tradition which shows itself in its practical aspects to be decisively theistic, but his theology purports to be a faithful presentation of the old Vedāntic teaching, and to have the authority of the ancient interpreters behind it. All the schools of Vedānta philosophy—Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Dvaita—claim to derive their teaching from three great sources—the *prasthāna traya* of the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Vedānta Sūtras*. In that consists their authority. No commentary was written by Rāmānuja, as by Śaṅkara, upon the *Upaniṣads*, which have the first place among the three in age and in importance, and, indeed, are alone properly described as Vedānta. But Rāmānuja's *Śrī Bhāṣya*, in expounding the *Sūtras*, professes to follow the 'ancient teachers', the *pūrvācāryas*, who may be supposed to have handed on the pure tradition of Vedāntic teaching. There is sufficient evidence at least to prove that a theistic interpretation of the *Sūtras*, and, therefore, of the *Upaniṣads*,

was no innovation, but had great names in the past among its adherents. The designation, *Śārīrika Mīmāṃsā*, as well as *Brahma Mīmāṃsā*, is given to this systematic account of the doctrines of the Vedānta, which is contained in the *Vedānta Sūtras*, and it has been suggested that that name itself contains an indication that Rāmānuja rightly represents these doctrines as theistic. The name signifies an 'inquiry concerning the embodied soul'. Here *Brahma* and *Śārīrika* are used as if they were synonyms, the reason being, according to Rāmānuja, that the world and individual souls form the body of Brahma, who, therefore, is the 'embodied soul' *par excellence*. This, as we shall see, is one of the central doctrines of Rāmānuja's philosophy of Theism, and as such might well give its designation to it.[1]

Certainly at first 'the embodied soul' seems a strange name by which to call the supreme Being, and especially strange when it is the name given to the *Brahman* of the Upaniṣads, seeing that the chief end of Vedāntic teaching is to obtain deliverance from the body, and so to attain to *Brahman*. When we understand, however, what this central doctrine of Rāmānuja's teaching really signifies, it will be seen that it is quite in agreement with the emphasis that the Upaniṣads place upon the immanence of *Brahman* in the universe and in man. *Brahman* is the *Śārīrika*, because he is the 'manifested soul'—'the entire complex of intelligent and non-intelligent beings' constitutes his body or form, or *śakti*, or *vibhūti* (manifestation of power). 'The highest *Brahman* is essentially free from all imperfection whatsoever, comprises within itself all auspicious qualities, and finds its pastime in originating, preserving, re-absorbing, pervading, and ruling the universe.'[2] '*Brahman* alone is the material, as well as the operative, cause of the universe.'[3] It has no

[1] Sukhtankar's *Teachings of Vedānta according to Rāmānuja*, p. 8; cf. *S. B. E.* XLVIII, p. 230.
[2] *S. B. E.* XLVIII, p. 88; *Commentary on Ved. Sūt.* I. i. 1.
[3] *Commentary on Ved. Sūt.* I. iv. 23.

existence apart from him. In the beginning, in the Vedānta phrase, there was 'one only without a second'. Rāmānuja, thus, is a monist no less than Śaṅkara, but his monism is Viśiṣṭādvaita, one that recognized attributes of God as real, that 'cognises *Brahman* as carrying plurality within itself (? himself), and the world which is the manifestation of his power as something real'.[1] All creatures have their source in *Brahman*, their home in *Brahman*, their support in *Brahman*; they exist only as 'modes' (*prakāra*) of *Brahman*. The objection that on this view *Brahman* being 'embodied' suffers, is met by the reply that 'it is not generally true that embodiedness proves dependence on *karma*', and it is *karma*, and not 'embodiedness', that brings suffering as its consequence. Further, *Brahman* is free from all dependence on *karma*, 'his nature being fundamentally antagonistic to all evil.'[2] Again, it is to be noticed that this immanence of *Brahman* in souls does not deprive them of freedom. The individual is able to will his actions, but the power that carries out his purpose is *Brahman*. 'The inwardly ruling, highest Self promotes action in so far as it (? he) regards in the case of any action the volitional effort made by the individual soul, and then aids that effort by granting its (his) favour or permission (*anumati*).'[3] Dr. Sukhtankar quotes the following passage as summing up Rāmānuja's view of the relation of the soul to God: 'The soul is created by *Brahman*, is controlled by it (? him), is its body, is subservient to it, is supported by it, is reduced to the subtle condition by it (viz. in the dissolution state of the world), is a worshipper of it, and depends on its grace for its welfare.'[4]

It will be seen that Rāmānuja by his doctrines of God and of man secures, as far as the limits imposed by certain Indian presuppositions which he shares permit, the possibility of a theistic faith. The universal Soul is he who alone possesses

[1] *Bhāṣya on Ved. Sūt.* I. i. 1; *S. B. E.* XLVIII, p. 89.
[2] *S. B. E.* XLVIII, pp. 239, 240.
[3] Op. cit., p. 557.
[4] Sukhtankar, op. cit., pp. 49, 50.

unconditioned personality, having 'the mastery over all worlds and wishes, and capability of realizing his own purposes'.[1] Individual souls, on the other hand, so long as they are bound to the wheel of re-birth, are of limited personality—they have *apuruṣārtha*, which Dr. Sukhtankar translates by 'want of the powers of a person'.[2] Full self-realization (*satyakāmatva*) is accordingly declared to be one of the qualities that form part of the experience of the released soul.[3] The method by which this experience is attained and the character of that experience are matters only second to his doctrines of God and man as indicating the value of Rāmānuja's Theism. There are two rocks in especial on which in this connexion an Indian theologian is in danger of being wrecked. The one is represented by the doctrine of *karma*, the other by the question of the persistence of conscious personality after release. Rāmānuja endeavours to avoid both those dangers. He does so in the former case, as the theist must, by emphasizing the supremacy of the 'Highest Person' over the *karma* of men. 'It is he only—the all-knowing, all-powerful, supremely generous one—who, being pleased by sacrifices, gifts, offerings, and the like, as well as by pious meditation, is in a position to bestow the different forms of enjoyment in this and the heavenly world, and release which consists in attaining to a nature like his own. For action which is non-intelligent and transitory is incapable of bringing about a result connected with a future time.'[4] The attribute 'supremely generous One', applied in this passage to the Supreme Person, is specially significant, as it points to another aspect of the freedom which Rāmānuja claims for him in relation to the acts of men. He interferes to 'check the tendency on the part of individual beings to transgress his laws',[5] and further, 'wishing to do a favour to those who are resolved on acting so as fully to please the Highest Person, he engenders in their minds a

[1] *Bhāṣya on Ved. Sūt.* I. i. 21.
[2] Sukhtankar, op. cit., p. 21.
[3] *Bhāṣya on Ved. Sūt.* III. iii. 40.
[4] Ibid. III. ii. 37.
[5] Ibid. II. ii. 3.

tendency towards highly virtuous actions such as are means to attain to him.'[1] Similarly it is maintained that he hardens the heart of the wicked--his action throughout being without cruelty or partiality. That Rāmānuja feels the bonds of the imperfectly moralized *karma* doctrine a constraint upon his Theism is evident. He scarcely ventures as far as the more strongly ethical Buddhist teachers in casting off its yoke. Certainly, however, throughout his whole teaching he places much more emphasis than is common within Hinduism on the autonomy of man in determining his fate, on the ability of moral personality to transcend the merely natural laws of the universe, and on the supremacy over it all, as the supreme moral personality, of him 'whose name is the highest *Brahman*'.[2]

It follows from this view of man's nature and of God's that the teaching of Rāmānuja is unambiguous also in claiming permanence of conscious life for the soul that, being set free, abides with the highest *Brahman*. This summit is attained by two means, the one, *bhakti*, which is 'steady remembrance' mediated by love,[3] and the other *vidyā* or meditation 'which cannot be accomplished without the devotee having previously broken with evil conduct'.[4] By these means—by 'praise, worship, and meditation'[5]—the soul reaches the 'abode of *Brahman*' and there 'abides within, i.e. is conscious of the highest *Brahman*'.[6] 'As moreover the released soul has freed itself from the bondage of *karman*, has its powers of knowledge fully developed, and has all its being in the supremely blissful intuition of the highest *Brahman*, it evidently cannot desire anything nor enter on any other form of activity, and the idea of its returning into the *saṃsāra*, therefore, is altogether excluded. Nor indeed need we fear that the Supreme Lord, once having taken to himself the devotee whom he greatly loves, will turn him back into the *saṃsāra*.'[7]

It has seemed desirable to set forth with some fullness the main doctrines of Rāmānuja's system, especially in those

[1] II. iii. 41. [2] IV. iv. 22. [3] I. i. 1. [4] IV. i. 13.
[5] III. ii. 40. [6] IV. iv. 19. [7] IV. iv. 22.

aspects which make clear the character of its Theism, because he certainly presents to us the highest intellectual altitude reached in all its varied history by Indian Theism, and because, further, his influence in strengthening that aspect of Indian religion through the centuries that followed was so remarkable. Devotion was now, as it had not hitherto been, definitely linked with reflection, and the combination gave it a new dignity. The weight of authority had up to this time been largely anti-theistic. It was the heart of the plain man, not the reason of the philosopher, that demanded a personal God to worship. The theistic expansion which we can trace in the succeeding centuries throughout the whole Indian continent was undoubtedly due in large measure to the new prestige that the school of Rāmānuja brought to the religion of *bhakti* by linking it to the ancient tradition of Vedāntic teaching. At the same time we can perceive how what had come to be the presuppositions of all Indian thought constrain and hamper even so convinced a theist and so ethical a thinker as Rāmānuja appears to have been. We have seen how he seeks to overcome the stubborn resistance that a formal doctrine of *karma* must always present to any attempt to reach a consistently theistic explanation of the universe. What he calls *prārabdha karma* proves too strong for even the grace of the Supreme Person to abrogate. It must be worked out to its conclusion. One way by which the binding influence of the 'deed' could be evaded, as already the *Bhagavadgītā* had taught, was to perform it with no desire for reward—with a heart not knit to it. This is oftener, perhaps, expressed by Rāmānuja as a heart that seeks in doing the act to propitiate the Supreme Person. A later teacher of his school, Piḷḷai Lokācārya, puts it thus: 'Motivelessness of all act arises from its being done as divine service; and is hence bereft of all binding character, such as entails phenomenal existence for the soul that does it.'[1] Such a view is perhaps satisfactory enough as regards the creature, but how of the Creator? How

[1] *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, p. 585.

is it that he is not bound by *karma*? This was a problem that, as we have seen,[1] had already presented itself to sceptical spirits in the *Mahābhārata*, and neither Śaṅkara nor Rāmānuja nor the Sūtrakāra himself could fail to face it. Their solution is the same, though Śaṅkara treats the problem perfunctorily as only a matter that concerns that lower plain of knowledge which is indeed no knowledge but delusion. He hints, indeed, at something better when he suggests that the work of the Creator 'may proceed from his own nature (*svabhāva*), like breathing in a man'.[2] It is necessary, however, in view of the *karma* doctrine, that this and indeed every act of the Lord should be motiveless, and this they can only construe as signifying that his work of creation is 'mere sport', as when a king plays a game of balls.[3] He cannot put his heart into the work, for then it would bind him even as it binds man. There is an ambiguity in the whole relation of the Supreme Person to this power that to the Indian vision has so great a grip upon the universe. It is beginningless. It controls 'all the activities of the soul, from thinking to winking of an eye'.[4] According even to the *Gītā* the Lord neither creates one's *karma* nor its fruits; 'it is its own nature that moves'.[5] Rāmānuja endeavours to set the Supreme Person above this law, but his supremacy over it seems even here to have its limits, and their relations are never fully adjusted on an ethical basis. The divine authority is never sufficiently vindicated as against this ancient rival that still retains about him so many signs of his dark and savage origin. The place accorded to the theistic God seems just to fall short of that from which he could rule men's hearts with an unchallengeable authority.

[1] See p. 82 above.

[2] Closely similar seems to have been the view put forth in the *Kārikā* of Gauḍapāda, an earlier work than Śaṅkara's. It states 'that the world is not an illusion or a development in any sense but the very nature or essence (*svabhāva*) of Brahma', just 'as the rays which are all the same (i. e. light) are not different from the sun'. Macdonell's *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 242.

[3] II. i. 34.

[4] Quoted from *Śrī Bhāṣya* by Sukhtankar, p. 47.

[5] Bhag. V. 14.

It is the moral and emotional warmth that pervades all his doctrine that gives to the system of Rāmānuja much of its power and of its distinction. That it should have still a near relation with mythology and with the idolatry of the multitude is not surprising. In harmony with the emphasis he lays upon the grace of God is the doctrine of incarnations which he adopts into his system. But here, as elsewhere, it is not easy to disentangle a moral conception of a God, whose nature is to reveal himself and to draw near to men, from a metaphysical doctrine—inspired by pantheistic and mystical presuppositions —which supposes God in his essential nature to be so remote and so exalted that mediating principles must intervene between him and a crude material world of men and things. Thus Śrī or Lakṣmī,[1] the wife of Viṣṇu, typifies, according to Rāmānuja, the activity of the Supreme Spirit in the region of the finite, and has been claimed by modern members of this School as corresponding to Jesus Christ. After he had created the universe 'from Brahmā down to stocks and stones', he 'withdrew into his own nature'. 'But', Rāmānuja goes on, 'as he is a great ocean of boundless grace, kindness, love, and generosity, he assumed various similar forms without putting away his own essential godlike nature, and time after time incarnated himself in the several worlds, granting to his worshippers rewards according to their desires, namely religion, riches, earthly love, and salvation, and descending, not only with the purpose of relieving the burden of earth, but also to be accessible to men even such as we are.'[2] Further,

[1] Later opinion in this School was divided on this subject. 'The Vaḍagalais look upon Śrī as a form or phase of the Supreme assumed mainly for spreading the truth, and equally with him infinite and uncreate. The Teṅgalais, on the other hand, give her an independent personality. She is looked upon as the mediator between God and man and while from one point of view she is created by the Supreme, from another point of view she is one with him.' G. A. Grierson in *J. R. A. S.*, 1910, pp. 566, 567. But according to A. Govindāchārya Swāmin Śrī is not 'a former phase of the Supreme', but 'a distinct personality'. *J. R. A. S.*, 1912, p. 715.

[2] Barnett's translation in *Heart of India*, p. 41.

according to this School, God has not only a *para* form, a transcendent essence, but *vyūha* forms, or manifestations fitted to 'perform severally the functions, in the material or manifested kosmos, of the making, the keeping, and the breaking of the fabric of worlds, countless. These derived godships take the names Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Saṅkarṣaṇa, and so forth.'[1]

In this and in all his teaching Rāmānuja was true to the long tradition to which he belongs in making the grace of God and the 'loving faith' of the worshipper central to his doctrine. But soon these very tenets became a cause of schism in his following. The relation of the divine grace to man's free will has been, elsewhere than in South India, a cause of theological strife, and the 'Teṅgalai' and 'Vaḍagalai' schools have their parallel in the Calvinists and Arminians of the Christian Church. The former, otherwise called the adherents of the Mārjāra-nyāya or Cat doctrine, maintained that God by his grace bears to the goal a passive worshipper, even as the cat her kitten. The latter claimed that man must be co-operant with God, clinging to him as the young of the monkey do to their mother. Theirs is the Markaṭa-nyāya—the Monkey doctrine. This schism is said to have shown itself a century after the time of Rāmānuja, the leader of the latter and more orthodox section being Vedānta Deśika, and that of the former being Piḷḷai Lokācārya. The innovating section set *prapatti* or self-sacrificing faith, as a means of deliverance from *saṃsāra* and of access to God, above mere *bhakti*. Along with this went increased emphasis on the openness of the path of approach to God for all men. 'This path of *prapatti* is accessible to all irrespective of caste, colour, or creed.'[2] This sect further attaches much importance to Ācāryābhimāna or 'resort to a mediator', 'who submits to personal suffering in order to redeem the fallen'. 'The Mediator, then, is the ready means, under the grace of which souls may take refuge and

[1] The *Arthapañcaka* of Lokācārya: *J. R. A. S.*, 1910, p. 576.
[2] *J. R. A. S.*, 1910, p. 584.

shape their conduct entirely at his sole bidding.'[1] The *Vacana Bhūṣaṇa*, one of Piḷḷai Lokācārya's works, which 'is held in extraordinary veneration by the followers of this school', is said to have as its chief features, 'the doctrine of surrender to one's Ācārya or Guru, advocated by this writer as a sufficient means of salvation, the emphasis given to the doctrine of grace by the assertion that even the sins of men are agreeable to God, and the somewhat unceremonious rejection of caste superiority as a ground for respect among men otherwise equally venerable as lovers of God'.[2] While the Teṅgalai school which maintained at once all of those advanced and somewhat startling doctrines was limited mainly to South India, we shall find that in different parts of the country Vaiṣṇavite sects arose from time to time holding one or another of those views. A failure to maintain the balance of a sane Theism and a tendency to fantastic exaggeration in certain directions characterize almost all the developments of Vaiṣṇavite doctrine, and seem to indicate a weakness somewhere. Even the well-knit fabric of Rāmānuja's system did not prevent his followers from wild and dangerous aberrations.

[1] The *Arthapañcaka* of Lokācārya: *J. R. A. S.*, 1910, p. 587.
[2] *The Vaiṣṇavite Reformers of India*, by T. Rajagopala Chariar, p. 131.

VIII

LATER VAIṢṆAVITE CULTS

RĀMĀNUJA'S is, perhaps, the greatest name in the whole history of the Vaiṣṇavite development. He completed the work for Indian Theism that was begun by the unknown author of the *Bhagavadgītā*, setting the corner-stone upon the structure, and establishing it in a position of strength such as it had not previously possessed in the midst of the ebb and flow of the religious thought and feeling of India. For that reason his name becomes a new *prasthāna* for Vaiṣṇavism throughout the country—a source whence flowed, north and west and east across the land, rivers of really vital and ethically ennobling religion. By means of what claimed to be a reasoned demonstration of its antiquity, and of its intimate relation with the most ancient and authoritative scriptures, he accomplished for Indian Theism a work similar to that which the Greek Fathers did for Christianity in its Hellenic environment.

There was, indeed, another philosophical construction of Vaiṣṇavite doctrine, to which, though much more limited in its influence, reference must be made before we indicate the course of some of the streams of piety and devotion of which those theologies that arose during this period form the watershed. This is the Dvaita system of Madhva or Ānandatīrtha, who arose near the western seaboard of South India in the thirteenth century, about three generations after Rāmānuja.[1]

[1] According to one tradition he died in 1197. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar inclines to the view that that may rather have been the time of his birth and that he 'lived in the first three-quarters of the thirteenth century'. (*Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 59.)

His system is mainly a vigorous protest against that of Śaṅkara, who is considered an incarnation of a demon sent to deceive mankind. His dualism is unqualified, the world being declared to be real and God to be the efficient cause only of a universe the substance of which is eternal. The individual soul is also real, and the only way of salvation is by means of *bhakti*, which procures deliverance from the bondage of *saṃsāra* and a life of bliss and perfection in the presence of God. God, or Nārāyaṇa, however, cannot be approached directly, but through a mediator, who is Vāyu. Responding to the faith of the worshipper, there is the grace of God. 'Both knowledge and wisdom and the *mokṣa* which a man of wisdom is fit to obtain are all the gift of the Lord.'[1] While in this matter agreeing with the teaching of other Vaiṣṇavite theologians, Madhva goes farther than most. He holds that, as it is the divine grace that sets men free, so it is the divine will that has cast them into bondage. Souls, according to him, are of three classes. 'Some are pre-ordained by their inherent aptitude to obtain *mukti*, others are destined for eternal hell, while a third class must keep revolving under the wheels of *saṃsāra* from eternity to eternity, now enjoying, and now suffering, in endless alternation (*nityasaṃsārin*).'[2] It will be seen how much emphasis in this doctrine is laid upon what, in the language of Christian theology, might be called the sovereignty of God, the relation of the soul to him, while mediated by *bhakti*, being that of complete dependence, a relation as of a servant to his master.

The influence of the teaching of Madhva, while not widely extended, has in certain respects been excellent. The standard of morality of those who profess his doctrine is said to be high, and the founder set himself in opposition to the sacrifice of animals, appointing again the ancient substitute of a 'barley ewe'. In some other respects, however, his influence and

[1] Mr. Subharao's Translation of Madhvācārya's *Gītā*, Introduction.

[2] *Life and Teaching of Śrī Madhva*, by C. M. Padmanabha Char, p. 337.

that of Rāmānuja have been less commendable. Whether or not by Rāmānuja himself, certainly by his immediate successors, idolatry was sanctioned—and this is true to a still greater extent of Madhva. Further, although Rāmānuja's teaching recognized the religious rights of all classes of the people, yet throughout its history in the South it betrays no tendency to promote any doctrine of equality. This also is true to a still greater extent of the other school. While one section of the Mādhavas is democratic enough to 'regard Kanarese and vernacular works with peculiar sanctity', their founder 'riveted the bonds of caste, and laid down very rigid rules for *varṇas* and *āśramas*'.[1] Both systems—the Śrī Vaiṣṇava of Rāmānuja and the Sad Vaiṣṇava of Madhva—betray, as has been already noted in regard to the former, a strain of intolerance somewhat unusual in Indian religion, but while in the case of the former this shows itself in the prohibition of the worship of any god but those of the Viṣṇu cult, in the case of the latter the main vehemence of its attack is directed against the rival system of Śaṅkara, while to Śiva and his worship some recognition is accorded. It will be seen that there is much that is common to both those teachers, but the Indian mind seems too powerfully attracted towards monistic interpretations of the universe for the dualistic system of Madhva to obtain any large following. It may be, as Swāmi Vivekānanda, himself a Bengali, affirms, that Caitanya of Bengal was a follower of Madhva, but if that is the case, his influence was more productive in North India than in the land of his birth. It is, in any case, to the North that we have now to turn in order to describe, as can only be done in the most general outline, those movements of theistic devotion that draw much of their strength from the theological reconstructions of those Vaiṣṇavite teachers of the South.

Of these the chief, certainly in the extent of its influence, probably also in its religious elevation, is that which is associated with the name of Rāmānanda. According to the

[1] Op. cit., pp. 257 and 271.

tradition that has come down in regard to him, he was the fifth in the 'apostolic succession' from Rāmānuja, and lived about the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries.[1] He found, it is said, the caste prejudices of his sect intolerable, and, leaving the South, travelled to Benares, where he gathered round himself a following, and gained a great name as a saint and teacher. To him Rāma, who had long been recognized alongside of Kriṣṇa as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, became the great means of the manifestation of the divine. From Rāmānanda's *maṭh* in Benares, powerful religious influences seem to have gone forth, borne in the speech of the common people to every rank and race. As was to be expected in view of the cause of his flight from the South, he recognized no difference of caste among his followers, and admitted to the highest places of his order even the humblest. His motto was, 'Let no one ask a man's caste or sect; whoever adores God, he is God's own.' 'He had twelve apostles . . . and these included, besides Brāhmans, a Musalman weaver, a leather worker (one of the very lowest castes), a Rājput, a Jat, and a barber. Nay, one of them was a woman.'[2] Of the Musalman weaver and the influence that flowed from Rāmānanda by that channel, receiving in its course powerful theistic reinforcement from Muḥammadanism, a recent invader, which was steadily advancing further into the country and establishing itself more firmly, we shall speak in the succeeding chapter. Rāmānanda does not appear to have come under this new influence, and there is another stream of theistic devotion that acknowledges him as its source, which appears to be much more purely Hindu in its character.

The first great name that we come to in this succession is

[1] According to one list there were twenty-one teachers between Rāmānuja and Rāmānanda and six between Rāmānanda and Tulsī Dās, *I. A.* XXII (1893), p. 266. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar inclines to date his birth in 1299 or 1300, and to place three generations between him and Rāmānuja.

[2] Grierson in *J. R. A. S.*, April 1907, p. 319.

that of Tulsī Dās, who, though he founded no sect, exercised, and still exercises, a wide and gracious influence over the whole of Northern India. He was born in 1532, and died in 1623, bequeathing to his countrymen as his chief work a Hindī version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, said to have been written in 1574. In this *Rāmacarit-Mānas*, 'the lake of the deeds of Rāma,' he has gathered round the name of Rāma, and made familiar to every peasant, the doctrines of *bhakti* and of the love and grace of God. 'Except, O Raghu-rai,' he says, 'by the water of faith and love, the interior stain can never be effaced. He is all-wise, he the philosopher, the scholar, the thoroughly accomplished, the irrefutable doctor, the truly judicious, and the possessor of every auspicious attribute, who is devoted to your lotus feet.'[1] The whole controversy between the pantheist and the theist in India is summed up, and the secret of the persistence of the doctrine of *bhakti* betrayed, in a passage towards the close of the poem where Bhusundi requests the seer Lomas to teach him how to worship the incarnate God. 'The great saint, being himself a philosopher, devoted to the mystery of the transcendental . . . began a sermon on Brahm, the unbegotten, the indivisible, the immaterial, the sovereign of the heart unchangeable, unwishful, nameless, formless . . . identical with yourself, you and he being as absolutely one as a wave and its water; so the Vedas declare. . . . But the worship of the impersonal laid no hold of my heart. Again I cried, "Tell me, holy father, how to worship the Incarnate. Devotion to Rāma, O wisest of sages, is like the element of water and my soul—which is, as it were, a fish—how can it exist without it?"'[2]

'The worship of the impersonal laid no hold of my heart' —in these words we have the secret of the great spiritual awakening, which, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, spread from one province to another of north and

[1] The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Tulsī Dās, Bk. VII. *Doha* 49 (Growse's translation).
[2] Op. cit., VII. *Doha* 107.

west and eastern India. That may be described as the period of the Indian theistic reformation, and, however uncertain we may be as to what all the sources of its inspiration were, it had certain characteristics that mark it as approximating much more closely to a genuine Theism than at any previous time in India. One of the marks of this movement is its sense of the relation of religion to the conduct of life. It gave a far higher place than did the speculation of the philosophers to moral qualities both in the gods and in their worship, though its morality is still the crude morality of a barbaric age. Another characteristic of it is that to a land that to most appeared, no doubt, peopled largely by Rāvaṇa's demon hosts, it brought a message of a God of grace. It also sought to place above *jñāna* and *karma* the worship of the devout and loving heart. But these characteristics, so truly those of a genuine theistic religion, while we recognize them as present in potency and promise, were still mingled with much that gives the religion as we study it even in the 'Lake of Rāma's Deeds', a strange and savage character. That poem appears, indeed, like a blend of the *Arabian Nights*, a philosophical tractate and a book of devotion. We cannot, for example, call that monotheism which still freely acknowledges a host of gods and demi-gods, though these are placed upon a lower level than the Supreme Lord, 'the Unutterable,' of whom they are parts. 'Knowing that the whole universe, whether animate or inanimate, is pervaded by the spirit of Rāma, I reverence with clasped hands the lotus feet of all—gods, giants, men, serpents, birds, ghosts, departed ancestors, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, demons of the night; I pray ye all be gracious to me.'[1] The incarnation of Rāma is again and again presented as an act of gracious condescension, 'to redeem his people.'[2] But there are other motives less ethical and more pagan that are alleged as well.[3] One object, too,

[1] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. *Doha* 8–11 (Growse).
[2] Op. cit., I. *Chhand* 2 (Growse, i, p. 36).
[3] Op. cit. (Growse, i, pp. 81, 86).

that he is said to have come to earth to accomplish is 'to reinstate the gods'.[1] Rāma himself at Rāmeśvaram makes a *liṅga*, and worships it, saying, 'There is none other so dear to me as Śiva. No man, though he call himself a votary of mine, if he offend Śiva, can ever dream of really finding me. If he desire to serve me out of opposition to Śiva, his doom is hell. To all who serve me unselfishly and without guile, Śiva will grant the boon of faith.'[2] Sītā especially has her place beside Rāma as 'primal energy, queen of beauty, mother of the world'.[3]

We see, again, how far the Theism of Tulsī Dās falls short of a fully spiritual religion in the power that still remains within it of the old and deeply rooted caste distinctions. The Brāhman is not yet deposed from his place of privilege. It is especially for the sake of Brāhmans, cows, and gods that Rāma has taken human form,[4] for the Brāhman is 'the very root of the tree of piety, . . . the destroyer of sin'.[5] 'A Brāhman must be honoured, though devoid of every virtue and merit, but a Śūdra never, though distinguished for all virtue and learning.'[6] The reverence for the *guru* that has a prominent place in all the spiritual teaching of this later period resolves itself here—differing in this respect from what we shall find to be the case among the followers of Kabīr—into reverence for the Brāhman. 'The *guru* can save from the Brāhman's anger, but if the *guru* himself be wroth, there is none in the world that can save. . . . My soul is disturbed by one fear; the curse of the Brāhman is something most terrible.'[7] Thus it appears that along with what is in many respects a noble reverence for one exalted personal Supreme, who is full of love and pity for his worshippers, there goes much that mars the picture. This Theism has not yet in it

[1] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. *Chhand* 2 (Growse, i, p. 72).
[2] Op. cit., VI. *Doha* 2–3.
[3] Op. cit., I. *Doha* 152 (Growse, i, p. 84).
[4] Op. cit., I. *Doha* 204 (Growse, i, p. 110).
[5] Op. cit., III. Invocation.
[6] Op. cit., III. *Doha* 28 (Growse, iii, p. 29).
[7] Op. cit., I. *Doha* 169 (Growse, i, p. 93).

the strength to reject either polytheism or pantheism, or the social conditions that accompany them. All it has attained to is a place beside them which sometimes, in hours of exaltation, seems a place above them.

This theological attitude is implied in the petition of Bhusundi to the seer Lomas, which we have quoted above. It is a somewhat wistful sense of need that creates this Theism, not yet the assurance of a deep conviction. So it is declared of a great sage who has followed the path of devotion that 'he was not absorbed into the divinity for this reason that he had already received the mysterious gift of faith (*bhakti*)'. We have here a doctrine of accommodation rather than an affirmation of the final truth, and as such it has not power to purge Hinduism of its ancient pagan inheritance. At the same time man is said to be 'in God's hands', His who is at once 'inaccessible and accessible', who, in spite of all those rival 'principalities and powers', is conceived to be in some real sense God over all. 'Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, the sun, the moon, the guardians of the spheres; Delusion, Life, Fate, and this Iron Age; the sovereigns of hell, the sovereigns of earth, and all the powers that be; magic and sorcery, and every spell in the Vedas and the Tantras, . . . all are obedient to Rāma's commands.'[1]

In Tulsī Dās, also, we find the doctrine of the power of the divine name set forth with the same emphasis which it obtains in the teaching of Kabīr and Nānak. 'Place the name of Rāma as a jewelled lamp at the door of your lips and there will be light, as you will, both inside and out.'[2] Just as we find that the *guru* ultimately takes a higher place than the God whom he mediates, so it is also with the name. 'The virtue of the name is infinite, and in my judgement is greater than Rāma himself.'[3] An explanation of the power of the name is actually supplied in the poem. 'A name may be

[1] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, II. *Doha* 244 (Growse, ii, p. 135).
[2] Op. cit., I. *Doha* 25 (Growse, i, p. 17).
[3] Op. cit., I. *Doha* 27 (Growse, i, p. 19).

regarded as equivalent to what is named, the connexion being such as subsists between a master and a servant. Both name and form are the shadows of the Lord, who, rightly understood, is unspeakable and uncreated. . . . See now the form is of less importance than the name, for without the name you cannot come to a knowledge of the form, but meditate on the name without seeing the form, and your soul is filled with devotion. The name acts as an interpreter between the material and immaterial forms of the deity, and is a guide and interpreter to both.'[1]

The teaching of Tulsī Dās is widely spread throughout Upper India, where his *Rāmacarit-Mānas* has been described as 'the one Bible of a hundred millions of people'. It is much the same in those general characteristics which we have sketched above with the teaching of the Marāṭha saints, whose work of religious reformation and awakening was scarcely less influential. We find here a long and remarkable series of poet seers who, from a date earlier than that of Rāmānanda down to the seventeenth century, handed on from one to another the lamp of an inward and a fervent faith. The first great name in this line of prophets is that of Jñāneśvar, a Brāhman of Alandi, near Poona. There is no question that his influence on the thought of his countrymen was very great, greater in the opinion of the late Mr. Justice Ranade, who speaks with authority of the seers of the Marāṭha country, being indeed of the same prophetic race himself—greater than that of any other Marāṭha saint except Tukārām. As is natural, perhaps, in a Brāhman—though one who, with his brothers and sisters, was for a while outcasted, because born of a father who had embraced the life of a *sannyāsī*, and subsequently returned to the duties of a householder—Jñāneśvar is more of a thinker, and that in India almost necessarily means more of a pantheistic thinker than others of this brotherhood of saints. At the same time, legends that have come down in regard to him show that he was an opponent

[1] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. *Doha* 24 (Growse, i, p. 17).

of the formalism and the priestly and ascetic pretensions of his time. One of these tells how he caused a buffalo to recite Vedic *mantras*, while, in another instance, he put the miraculous *yoga* powers of Cāngdev, who came to him riding on a tiger and using a snake as a whip, to shame by making a wall act in similar fashion as his horse. His great work is called *Jñāneśvarī*, and consists of an elaborate paraphrase in Marāṭhī verse of the *Bhagavadgītā*. It was completed in 1290, and ten years later its author died.

The very fact that Jñāneśvar's great work is in the people's language indicates that, Brāhman and philosopher as he was, his inclination was towards a message that would reach the people's heart, and on the whole a study of his poem confirms this view. He recognizes that though there are other high and hard ways, the way of *bhakti* is the best for men. By the way of *yoga* they get nothing more; 'only more toil and pain.' It is 'like fighting continually with death'. 'By *bhakti* one obtains the Manifested; by *yoga* the Unmanifested. There are these two ways by which to reach thee, and the Manifested and Unmanifested are the door-lintels to be crossed.'[1] The 'grace of the *guru*' is invoked as one of the great means of attainment. 'Thou art a mother to the seeker; wisdom springs up in thy footsteps.'

What Rāma was to Tulsī Dās, that Viṭhobā of Paṇḍharpūr, a village on the river Bhīma, was to the Marāṭha singers. Another name of Viṭhobā is Viṭṭhal, which is said to be a corruption of Viṣṇu, and the legend represents him as Kṛiṣṇa, turning back again from Rādhā to his wedded wife Rukmiṇī. Though it is true that the name of this god appears nowhere in the *Jñāneśvarī*, a series of short poems called *abhangs*, which are attributed to Jñāneśvar, are full of the praises of Viṭhobā, and the tradition links his name with that of this deity, around whom so much of the *bhakti* of the Marāṭha country has gathered. In the case of Nāmdev and Tukārām, there is no question of the closeness of this association. The

[1] XII. 23.

former, who was a younger contemporary of Jñāneśvar, and who is included by Nānak among the Vaiṣṇava saints whom he recognizes as the progenitors of his doctrine, is said to have been born in the year 1270. He was a tailor by caste, but all the same is said to have been the friend and associate of the Brāhman Jñāneśvar. His *abhaṅgs*, of which tradition tells that he produced a prodigious number, are occupied with the praises of the god of Paṇḍharpūr, where he spent the latter years of his life, and where he attained *samādhi*, and passed from among men. A story that is handed down in regard to him illustrates the character that was attributed to this god, and helps to explain the intense devotion that he inspired in his *bhaktas* (devotees). Nāmdev was at first, according to the tale, a robber, but the lamentations of an unhappy widow, whose husband had been murdered by the band to which Nāmdev belonged, pierced his heart with a sense of his sin, and drove him, as he said, to 'make a friend of repentance'. He betook himself first to a Śaivite temple, but found no mercy and no hope in the grim god. In his remorse he thrust a knife into his head as he cried out for mercy before the idol, and when the blood spurted from his wound and defiled the god, the people of the village cast him forth in anger. Then in the hour of his extremity, the story goes, a vision bade him go to Paṇḍharpūr for, he was told, 'its patron god Viṭṭhal will purge thee of thy sins and thou shalt not only obtain salvation, but renown as one of the god's saints.' It is such a god that his heart cries for, 'even as a child', as he says, 'for the mother whom it has missed'.

The messages of Nāmdev and of the later Tukārām are so closely similar that Tukārām was said to be an *avatāra* of the earlier poet. He was born in 1608, in the village of Dehu, about thirty miles from Poona. He was a Śūdra shopkeeper, but belonged to a family that for seven generations had given themselves to the *bhakti* of Viṭhobā.[1] His *abhaṅgs* have sunk

[1] There is a story in one of his *abhaṅgs* that he was instructed in *bhakti* by three 'Caitanyas'. This may possibly indicate that he was influenced by that sect.

into the hearts of the Marāṭha people of every class, and are familiar on their lips to an extent that makes his influence supreme above that of all the other seers of this evangelical succession. What drew both him and Nāmdev to this god was his association, however it may have arisen, with sentiments and hopes that won the heart. They would both say, as Nāmdev says, 'I am wearied with inquiry; and so I throw myself on thy mercy'. 'I do not want salvation nor knowledge of *Brahman*,' he says again, referring, of course, to the *mokṣa* of the 'way of knowledge'. 'My senses, when I seek to crush them, plead piteously and promise to cling to thee everywhere.' The songs of both of these poets, and, indeed, the whole of the religious utterance of this religious revival, are attuned to this cry of the heart which has in it the true note of *bhakti* and of faith, though sometimes near to faint, in the love of God:—

Thee, Lord of pity, I beseech,
  Come speedily and set me free.
(Yea, when he hears my piteous speech,
  All eager should Nārāyaṇ be.)
Lo, in the empty world apart,
  I hearken, waiting thy footfall.
Viṭṭhal, thou father, mother art!
  Thou must not loiter at my call.
Thou, thou alone art left to me,
  All else, when weighed, is vanity.
Now, Tukā pleads, thy gift of grace complete;
Now let mine eyes behold thine equal feet.

There are the same cross-currents of Pantheism and of Theism in these poets' unsystematic utterances as we find nearly everywhere in Indian religion. It may be, of course, that we have a development in their experience from the traditional *Brahman* doctrine to something more inward and personal, or it may be that their voluminous works have been interpolated. But it is quite as probable that these represent various moods, now more reflective, now more ardently devotional. We need not look in them for an articulated

system, but at the most for 'winds of doctrine'. Their *bhakti* is too exclusively rooted in the feeling life to continue long in one stay or to have much clearness of outline. They are still far from having purged themselves of polytheism or even of idolatry. There is a legend of Nāmdev's *guru*, which is related also, *mutatis mutandis*, of Nānak at Mecca. When Nāmdev went to seek his *guru's* grace he was shocked to find him lying with his feet upon the *liṅga* (phallus) of Śiva. When he pointed out the impropriety the *guru* asked him, 'Where is the place where God is not?' and to Nāmdev's amazement he saw that wherever the holy man turned his feet there always was a *liṅga*. Such a lesson as that is full of profound reflection, but it does not put an end to idolatry. The god whom Tukārām worshipped was always the idol Viṭhobā, standing on its 'brick' at Paṇḍharī. These saints did not all even worship the same god. While Viṭhobā's is the name that leads all the rest, another of them, Rāmdās, worshipped Rāma, and Kṛiṣṇa, Śiva, Dattātreya, and Gaṇpati served as the symbol and channel of the divine to various members of the succession of reformers. Mr. Justice Ranade has described them as the Protestants of Mahārāṣṭra, but there was little of the Protestant exclusiveness and urgency of conviction in their message. They often denounce, it is true, the old aboriginal deities.

> 'A stone with śendūr[1] painted o'er,' says Tukārām,
> 'Brats and women bow before.'

They were fully aware of the vanity of much of the ritual religion.

> They bathe in many a holy river,
> But still their hearts are dry as ever.

And their deepest desire is expressed in the words:

> Find, O find, some means or other
> To bring God and man together.

Such sayings as these of Tukārām's are familiar to every peasant, and cannot but have an influence in bearing witness

[1] Red lead.

to the spiritual character of true religion. Their success in overcoming the prejudices of caste was, however, very partial and temporary. Of one of the saints called Cokhāmelā, an outcast Mahār, a pathetic and significant story is related. When remonstrated with for having dared to enter the temple at Paṇḍharpur he replied that he had not gone there of his own accord, but had been borne in against his will by the god himself. He defended himself further in these words: 'What availeth birth in high caste, what avail rites or learning, if there is no devotion or faith? Though a man be of low caste, yet if he is faithful in heart and loves God, and regards all creatures as though they were like himself, and makes no distinction between his own and other people's children, and speaks the truth, his caste is pure, and God is pleased with him. Never ask a man's caste when he has in his heart faith in God and love of men. God wants in his children love and devotion, and he does not care for caste.'[1]

Tukārām is believed to have been translated to heaven in the year 1649, and his death may be taken as marking the close of this remarkable movement which centres so largely about Viṭhobā and Paṇḍharpūr. Certainly the worship that centres round this god has some of the marks of true spiritual devotion. What is most significant in regard to it is its association with music and with song. Its history through six centuries, as far as it is known to us, is a history of the poets who sang the praises of Viṭhobā, and who worshipped at his shrine. Some of the saints who were associated more or less closely with this god, were women, 'a few were Muḥammadan converts to Hinduism, nearly half of them were Brāhmans, while there were representatives in the other half from among all the other castes, Marāṭhas, kunbis (farmers), tailors, gardeners, potters, goldsmiths, repentant prostitutes, and slave-girls, even the outcaste Mahārs'.[2] The most striking features of the worship are connected with the great fairs, to

[1] Ranade's *Rise of the Marāṭha Power*, pp. 153 f.
[2] Ranade, op. cit., p. 146.

which year by year people flock by the hundred thousand from every district of the Marāṭha country. What gives these pilgrimages to Paṇḍharpūr their unique character is the custom in accordance with which the living who throng there bring with them the spirits of the famous devotees of the god of ancient days. In fifteen different palanquins those saints come, each from the place in which he 'took *samādhi*' or passed to the blessedness of union with God, and each accompanied by a great concourse of fellowworshippers. Nearly every one of these saints is at the same time a poet. It seems as if these worshippers were under some constraint to sing. As many as a hundred different companies of singing and playing men escort the palanquins, chanting the praises of the saints in their own or some other poet's verses. What the religious movement to which they belonged accomplished is described thus by Mr. Ranade: 'It gave us a literature of considerable value in the vernacular language of the country. It modified the strictness of the old spirit of caste exclusiveness. It raised the Śūdra classes to a position of spiritual power and social importance almost equal to that of the Brāhmans. It gave sanctity to the family relations, and raised the status of woman. It made the nation more humane, at the same time more prone to hold together by mutual toleration. It suggested, and partly carried out, a plan of reconciliation with the Muḥammadans. It subordinated the importance of rites and ceremonies, and of pilgrimages and fasts, and of learning and contemplation, to the higher excellence of worship by means of love and faith. It checked the excesses of polytheism. It tended in all these ways to raise the nation generally to a higher level of capacity, both of thought and action.'[1]

Not only to the North and to the West, but to every province of India, the wave of this remarkable religious revival carried its influence and stirred the stagnant waters. Perhaps nowhere was its influence so genuinely for good as in

[1] Ranade, *Rise of the Marāṭha Power*, pp. 171 f.

the case of the worship that gathered about Viṭhobā and Rāma. It would be peculiarly interesting if in the case of Viṭhobā we could accept the view in regard to his shrine at Paṇḍharpūr that holds it to have been originally a Buddhist shrine, and believe that it was the personality of that saint that has had a purifying and ennobling influence upon the cult. The devotion rendered here to Kṛiṣṇa and his wedded wife Rukmiṇī is rendered more often in other parts of India to Kṛiṣṇa and Rādhā. In such cases it was sometimes, no doubt, more fervent than that which we have been describing; it certainly was often more sensuous and in most cases it speedily became corrupt and gross. One sect which illustrates more perhaps than any other the serious dangers that were inherent in these movements when certain features of the cult were allowed to become prominent, is that of the Vallabhācārīs. Its founder was Vallabhācārya, who was born about 1478 in Telingana. He is classed as belonging to the *Rudra Sampradāya* and was connected with an earlier teacher called Viṣṇusvāmī, who was perhaps its founder. The system of doctrine which he taught, called Śuddhādvaita—that is thoroughgoing *advaita*, without *māyā*—was probably in itself harmless, but the evil consequences that declared themselves among his followers are to be attributed to the place given in his sect to the worship of Kṛiṣṇa in association with the *gopīs* and with Rādhā. He preached his doctrine in the very land of Kṛiṣṇa about Mathurā, but the chief centre of his influence is in Gujarāt. Nimbārka, the titular founder of the sect of Nimāvats or the *Sanakādi-sampradāya* (that is, the school of which Sanaka was the founder), who is said to belong to the twelfth century, while he taught a doctrine that in other respects is closely akin to that of Rāmānuja, had also established in the same district a Rādhā-Kṛiṣṇa sect, and was a precursor of Vallabha. The effect of a religion that set before itself as the object of its adoration the sensual Kṛiṣṇa of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Gītā Govinda*, could scarcely fail, one would have thought, to prove evil. That the worship

of Kṛiṣṇa as a matter of fact was not always so, but sometimes has obtained the service of pure and earnest hearts, remains a constant marvel. It may be that sometimes he is—as in the *Bhagavadgītā*—little more than a human name, bringing God near; or, as in the case perhaps of the Viṭṭhal of Tukārām, that some less unworthy personality, associated somehow with this particular Kṛiṣṇa worship, overshadows and conceals the grosser aspects of the god. In the case of the Vallabhas, a further source of evil, besides that which came from the unsavoury tales that the name of their god suggested, was in the dangerous honour that among so many Vaiṣṇavas —among the Teṅgalais of the South, for example, and among the Kabīr-Panthīs of the North—is rendered to the *ācārya* or *guru*. The danger of this doctrine and the sensual depths to which the sect had by that time fallen were demonstrated when, in 1862, in the High Court of Bombay, their Mahārājas or religious teachers were found even to claim and to receive from ardent devotees the *jus primae noctis*.

The followers of this sect as they are found at Mathurā are thus described by Growse: 'They are the Epicureans of the East, and are not ashamed to avow their belief that the ideal life consists rather in social enjoyment than in solitude and mortification. Such a creed is naturally destructive of all self-restraint, even in matters where indulgence is by common consent held criminal; and the profligacy to which it has given rise is so notorious that the Mahārāja of Jaipūr was moved to expel from his capital the ancient image of Gokul Candrama, for which the sect entertained special veneration, and has further conceived such a prejudice against Vaiṣṇavas in general, that all his subjects are compelled, before they appear in his presence, to mark their foreheads with the three horizontal lines that indicate a votary of Śiva.' [1]

Such carnivals of sensual religion as this and others which fall to be mentioned, were not allowed to exercise their sway without earnest protests on the part of those who realized that

[1] Quoted in *E. R. E.* II, p. 345.

the conscience has its claims in religion no less than the heart. We are told, for example, of a Gujarātī poet Akho who began by being an enthusiastic follower of Vallabha, but was soon disillusioned and 'in bitterness of soul compared his *guru* to an old bullock yoked to a cart he could not draw, a useless expense to his owner, and to a stone in the embrace of a drowning man which sinks where it is expected to save'. There were few provinces of India that had not such Protestants and Puritans. What a student of the Gujarātī poet saints says of them is certainly true in large measure of those of the Marāṭha country as well. 'They', he says—men of all kinds and of all castes, 'are what the prophets were in old Israel. They have made a stand against the pretensions of the priests and have advocated a living spiritual religion instead of the lifeless formal religion of outward ceremony.'[1]

When we turn to Bengal and to Caitanya we find a religious movement of a character scarcely less restrained similarly associated with the worship of Rādhā-Kṛiṣṇa. Caitanya was almost contemporaneous with Vallabhācārya, but like him he had precursors. There was first the Sahajiā cult of which Caṇḍīdās in the fourteenth century was an exponent. In this cult 'salvation was sought by a process of rituals in which young and beautiful women were required to be loved and worshipped'.[2] That was followed by the *Parakīya Rasa* or 'the romantic worship of a woman other than one's own wife'.[3] This, otherwise called *Madhura Rasa*, is viewed as a symbol of the longing of the soul for God as represented by Rādhā's passion for Kṛiṣṇa. The dangers of such doctrines are obvious enough. Caṇḍīdās himself says that 'in a million it would be difficult to find one' who could overcome them.[4] As we read many of the expressions of this type of devotion, we realize that those who professed it did not distinguish the sensuous from the spiritual. The whole atmosphere of sensuousness in which they move, the kisses

[1] H. R. Scott, *Gujarati Poetry*.
[2] D. C. Sen, p. 38.
[3] Op. cit., p. 116.
[4] Op. cit., p. 45.

and embraces, the assignations and seductions, give strength to their passion, but certainly do not give it purity. 'Virtue and vice', says Caṇḍīdās, and it is not surprising that he should say it, 'are alike to me. I know them not, but know thy feet alone.' This Sahajiā cult seems to have been widely spread throughout Bengal, but though undoubtedly it is one of the progenitors of the Caitanya sect and closely akin to it in its teaching, it is only fair to the founder of that sect to say that he was much stricter in his view of the relation of his ascetic followers with women.

It is said to be to Mahāyāna Buddhism, which, as we have seen, gives a large place to devotion, that the inclination of Bengal towards Vaiṣṇavism is mainly due.[1] It has even been maintained that many who outwardly professed that faith and spread the Caitanya cult in their hearts were followers of this doctrine. It had become greatly corrupted by the influence within it of what were probably aboriginal worships, and had assumed a form which has been designated Vajrayāna and later what is called Tāntric Buddhism. The grossness of these forms of the religion and their worship of the *śakti* or female energy give them a close affinity with such a cult as that of the Sahajiās, and it may well have been the case that their influence assisted the spread of some of the more sensuous Vaiṣṇavisms. However that may be, we may at least accept the suggestion that the soil of Bengal was prepared to receive such a message as Caitanya's by the emphasis that Mahāyānism, only then disappearing from the country, placed upon devotion as well as upon reverence for the *guru* and the power of the name. It may, perhaps, rather be claimed that all of these have their root in the instinct that craves for personal fellowship with a God who is felt to be remote but whom his worshippers desire to bring, by one means or another, near to their understanding and their hearts. No doubt it was especially the brotherhood of Vaiṣṇavism that attracted the members of the disappearing Buddhist faith. It is believed at

[1] *Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa*, p. 39.

all events that the scattered Mahāyānists 'merged in the great community of the Vaiṣṇavas'. These elements were favourable to the Vaiṣṇava revival which Caitanya was to inaugurate, and on the other hand there were the horrors of Tantrism and of many another gross superstition, making the need of such a revival evident to every true-hearted seeker after God. It was amid such surroundings that Caitanya was born at Minapur in Navadwīpa in 1486.[1] His original name was Viśvaṃbhara Miśra or Nimai, as he was commonly called. He is believed by some, as has already been indicated, to have been a follower of Madhva. There is also evidence that the influence of Vallabhācārya may have reached as far as Navadwīpa, seeing that Caitanya is said to have married his daughter. He is said also to have met when a lad and conquered Keśava Kāśmīrī, a famous Sanskrit scholar who visited the town of his birth. But it is not necessary to go beyond the Vaiṣṇavite inheritance of Bengal itself to find the sources of his teaching. We are told that in his last days he would spend whole nights singing the songs of Caṇḍīdās and Vidyāpati, and we may be sure that they were the inspirations as well of his earlier years. It was when he was on pilgrimage to the temple of Viṣṇu at Gayā that he fell into the first of those trances which his intense emotion in the presence of Kṛiṣṇa seems frequently to have brought upon him. In 1509 he became a *sannyāsī* and took the name of Kṛiṣṇa Caitanya. In 1534 he disappeared and was believed to have been translated to heaven.

Caitanya's life seems to have been a continuous frenzy of devotion to Kṛiṣṇa. 'His life', says one Bengali admirer, 'was a course of thanksgiving, tears, hymns, and praises offered to God.'[2] So fervent was his rapture, and so intense his desire to be to Kṛiṣṇa as Rādhā was to her divine lover that we can believe that he was sometimes heard to murmur, 'I am He.'

[1] This is the date given by D. C. Sen in his *Bengali Language and Literature.*

[2] D. C. Sen, p. 441.

It is not surprising, therefore, that even in his lifetime he was considered an incarnation of the deity. Singing and dancing were employed to express the ecstatic emotion which the sense of the god's presence awakened in him, and sometimes it is said that in his rapture he would lose all consciousness of outward things. As is natural in the case of so emotional a worship, one of the special characteristics of his sect—though it, no doubt, accompanied in more or less degree every cult of devotion—is the influence in it of the *kīrtan* or worship by means of music and singing. This mode of worship is also believed by some to be an inheritance from Buddhism.[1] This is how a modern Bengali writer, an ardent follower of 'Lord Gauraṅga', as Caitanya, being elevated to the rank of an incarnation, is now designated, describes this part of the worship of the sect: 'In the course of the *kīrtan* the members often exhibited many external signs of deep emotion. They would become senseless or roll on the ground, embrace one another, laugh and cry alternately, and sometimes, as with one voice, make the sky resound with the ejaculation of "Hari bol, Hari". They felt themselves immersed, as it were, in a sea of divine *bhakti*. They felt as if they were with Kṛiṣṇa and Kṛiṣṇa with them. Every one present was, in spite of himself, carried away by the torrent of religious excitement.'[2] Such hysterical devotion, which set before itself as its highest attainment *mādhurya* or love such as Rādhā felt for Kṛiṣṇa could hardly fail to have disastrous effects. There are three respects, however, in which such Vaiṣṇavism as that of Caitanya made protest, for a time at least, against the traditional religion. It broke through the restrictions of caste, admitting to its ranks even Śūdras and Muḥammadans. They still sing of Caitanya in Bengal, 'Come see the god-man who does not believe in caste.'[3] This Vaiṣṇavism likewise permitted in its lower ranks the re-marriage of widows, and further, as in the case of other similar movements, it opposed much of the

[1] D. C. Sen, p. 571. [2] S. K. Ghose's *Lord Gauranga*, pp. 109 f.
[3] Op. cit., p. 462.

formal ritual of the Śāstras, and denied the sanctity of shrines.[1] These things, however, had their effect for but a little while, and were more than counterbalanced by the gross evils to which the cult's unbridled emotionalism opened wide the door. Presently, says D. C. Sen, 'fallen women and pariahs swelled its ranks, and the result was that the allegory of Rādhā and Kṛiṣṇa was made an excuse for the practice of many immoralities.'[2] It was sought to prove that a Muḥammadan leader of the sect was really a Brāhman. 'Many of the Caitanya sects', says Mr. T. Rajagopala Chariar, 'adopted the reprehensible practices of the Tāntrics or Śāktas, and hence fell into those very sins which moved the moral wrath of Caitanya, and prompted his attempts at reform.'[3]

Closely akin to both the Vallabhas and the Caitanyas is the sect of which Mīrā Bāī, the Queen of Udaipur, was the founder in the fifteenth century. She gave proof of her devotion to Kṛiṣṇa by renouncing for love of him her kingdom and her husband.[4] At last, according to the legend, she cast herself before his image, and besought him to take her wholly to himself. Thereupon 'the god descended from his pedestal and gave her an embrace which extricated the spark of life. "Welcome, Mīrā," said the lover of Rādhā, and her soul was absorbed into his'.[5] She is the authoress of a poem in praise of Kṛiṣṇa, which is a sequel to the *Gītā Govinda*. There is

[1] S. K. Ghose's *Lord Gauranga*, p. 579.
[2] Op. cit., p. 606.
[3] *The Vaiṣṇavite Reformers of India*, p. 149.
[4] 'In a thousand sweet and homely songs the broken heart of Mīrā Bāī sung itself out, and the love which the Rāna had claimed in vain, was poured upon the divine and invisible ideal of her soul, and her songs live to this day after 400 years. Pious women in Gujarat sing them in the presence of the same ideal and feel they are nearer heaven than earth when Mīrā's music is on their tongues. Young women sing them at home and in public choruses, for Mīrā's ideal is held to be an ideal for all women, and the heart of Mīrā was as pure and innocent and sweet and God-loving as the heart of woman should be.' G. M. Tripathi, quoted by H. R. Scott in his lecture on Gujarati Poetry. Mr. Scott goes on, 'This is not the impression perhaps that Mīrā Bāī's *Padas* would make on our minds, but it is an indication of how the people of Gujarat can idealize these old songs.'
[5] Tod's *Rajasthan*, ii, p. 722.

a legend of her which illustrates the character of the *mādhurya* —the love as of a woman to her lover—which is the distinctive feature of those Kṛiṣṇa sects which we have been describing. It is said that when Mīrā Bāī had left all for Kṛiṣṇa, she journeyed to Brindaban to visit a *bhakta* of the Caitanya sect,[1] but he refused to see her on the ground that he could not look upon the face of a woman. When she heard his message Mīrā Bāī replied, 'Is he then a male? If so he has no access to Brindaban. Males cannot enter there, and if the goddess of Brindaban comes to know of his presence she will turn him out. For does not the great Goswami know that there is but one male in existence, namely my beloved Kanai Lal (Kṛiṣṇa), and that all besides are females?'[2]

With those examples of the perilous places in which Vaiṣṇavite devotion has sometimes found itself in its strange and chequered history as we have sought to trace it, we shall bring our investigation of the specifically Vaiṣṇavite Theisms to a close. There have been later quickenings of this inextinguishable spirit in the land, but these, though tracing their descent from those ancient sources of spiritual life, and claiming with some justice the title of 'Bhāgavata Dharma', or of the Ārya or the Brāhmo faith, owe so much, whether consciously or not, to influences that have invaded the land from without in modern times, that they can scarcely be called pure types of Indian Theism. There are, however, some parallel streams of theistic inspiration, which, while not necessarily uninfluenced by Vaiṣṇavism, have their head-waters elsewhere, and to these we shall now briefly turn.

[1] This, however, is chronologically impossible, if Kumbha's (Mīrā Bāī's husband) date is correctly given as 1438–83. This date is not only irreconcilable with the incident here related but also with the account in Tod's *Rajasthan*.

[2] Shishir Kumar Ghose's *Lord Gauranga*, p. xl.

IX

KABĪR AND NĀNAK

From Rāmānanda, the South Indian follower of Rāmānuja, who found his native land of the South too narrow for him, and set up his *maṭh* on the banks of the Ganges, there went forth a remarkable theistic influence that flowed in various streams through all the provinces of India. As typical of two of those currents of religious life which claim him as their source we may name Tulsī Dās, of whom we have already spoken, on the one hand, and Kabīr on the other. There are no names in the history of Indian Theism that are more worthy of honour than are these, and there are none that are even now more honoured, or whose words are more widely known and familiar to the common people. The two names convey indeed a different suggestion ; the one, that of Tulsī Dās, connoting a teaching that is more purely Hindu in its descent and in its mode of thought and of expression ; the other, that of Kabīr, while also deeply dyed of Hinduism, yet influenced at the same time to a powerful extent by the new religious attitude that had by this time entered India with the Muḥammadan invaders. A distinct character is given to the Theisms into which the new element enters, which differentiates them from those that are purely indigenous in the sources of their inspiration. The languor of the Hindu atmosphere is replaced by a new stringency, a new vigour, even if it is only in its negations, and a more decidedly ethical outlook. It is evident again and again, as we read the sayings of this group of saints, that new blood has flowed into a Hinduism of which robustness had never been the note, and which had been growing more and more anaemic. There are

even occasional gleams in these pages of Arab fierceness and fanaticism. It was these elements in it, combining with Durgā-worship and the darker side of Hinduism, that produced the Akālīs and Guru Govind Singh. Some of these characteristics are already present in the teaching of Kabīr. There is a virility in his views and their expression which is new and refreshing. His own immediate followers, the Kabīr Panthīs, number from eight to nine thousand, and are scattered over a wide area of North and Central India. His influence is not, however, confined within these limits, but is to be traced in a considerable number of sects, of which the largest and most notable is that of the Sikhs, founded by Kabīr's most famous follower, Nānak. Other religious teachers in whom the influence of Kabīr can be distinctly traced are Dādū of Ahmedabad, founder of the Dādū Panthīs, Jagjivan Dās of Oude, founder of the Satnāmīs, Bābā Lāl of Malwa, Bribhān, founder of the Sādhus, Śiva Nārāyaṇ of Ghazipur, and Caran Dās of Alwar.

Whether or not all these religious teachers were directly indebted to Kabīr, in the modes of their thought they bear a kinship to him, and they have all to acknowledge in him a priority in time in respect of the common indebtedness which they, whether explicitly or not, confess to Hindu influences on the one hand, and to Muḥammadan influences on the other. In the case of Kabīr the combination in his teaching of these two elements is strikingly illustrated by his personal history. He was born early in the fifteenth century, and was a Julaha or Muḥammadan weaver. Part of his life was probably spent in Benares, where he was associated with the Rāmānandīs. Whether he was actually himself a disciple of Rāmānanda, and one of his twelve apostles, as legend affirms, is uncertain. There is no reason, indeed, why this may not have been so during that period of religious exultation,[1] and parallel instances may be cited in the case of Haridās, the Muḥammadan disciple of Caitanya,[2] and Shaik

[1] Grierson in *J. R. A. S.*, Jan. 1908, p. 248. [2] D. C. Sen, p. 509.

Mohammad among the Marāṭha saints of Paṇḍharpūr.[1] Kabīr is believed to have come under Sūfī influences, which are said to have been present in the district through which he travelled seeking light at various shrines.[2] He died probably in the year 1518[3] at Maghar in the district of Gorākhpur. A dispute is said to have arisen over his body, the Muḥammadans desiring to bury it and the Hindus to burn it, but when the cloth beneath which it lay was lifted, there was found, according to the legend, only a heap of flowers.[4]

The account of Kabīr that is given by Nābhājī in the *Bhakta Mālā* is as follows: 'Kabīr refused to acknowledge caste distinctions or to recognize the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, nor did he set any store by the four divisions of life (*Āśramas*) prescribed by Brāhmans. He held that religion without *bhakti* was no religion at all, and that asceticism, fasting, and almsgiving had no value if unaccompanied by worship (*bhajan*, hymn-singing). By means of Ramaiṇīs, Śabdas, and Sākhīs he imparted religious instructions to Hindus and Muḥammadans alike. He had no preference for either religion, but gave teaching that was appreciated by the followers of both. He spoke out his mind fearlessly, and never made it his object merely to please his hearers.'[5] That this is on the whole a fair account of Kabīr's teaching, one who examines the writings that have come down to us bearing his name will agree. It is true that in his case, as in that of every Indian sage who has attained a place of honour and authority, much has been attributed to him which probably is far enough from agreement with what he actually taught. That is evident from the contradictions in which his alleged writings abound. The term Muwahid or a believer in one God which is given to him in the *Dabistan*, confirms the view that his essential doctrine was theistic and not pantheistic.[6]

[1] Ranade's *Rise of the Marāṭha Power*, p. 155.
[2] *Bījak*, *Ramaiṇī*, 30 (Premchand's translation).
[3] Westcott, p. 3, note 6.
[4] This story is also told of Nānak's death, Macauliffe, pp. 190, 191.
[5] Westcott, p. 30.
[6] Westcott, op. cit., p. 38.

It was inevitable that when the Moslem monotheism had any influence at all, that influence should be strongly opposed to the toleration of polytheism and idolatry, which has always been so fatal a characteristic of Pantheism even among its enlightened exponents in India. On the other hand, the evils of caste, idolatry, and polytheism, the spirituality of true worship, and the divine personality, were the subjects upon which contact with Islam was sure, in the case of thoughtful Hindus, to stimulate reflection. At the same time Hinduism had a contribution to make which was of real value. The effect of the contact of the two religions should have been, as Mr. Justice Ranade claims it was, to make the Muḥammadans less bigoted and the Hindus more puritanic and single-minded in their devotion. Mr. Ranade notes the difference in this respect between North India and the South, where there was no such fusion of Hindu and Moslem thought, but where 'the Hindu sectarian spirit intensified class pride and idolatrous observances'.[1]

There is every likelihood, as we have noted, that the teaching of Kabīr as time went on has been made to assume a form more and more fully Hindu. We are probably right in concluding that in his *Bījak* whatever is most outspoken in its criticism of Hindu customs and ideas is most certainly genuine. Here are a few examples of such sayings from his *Bijak* and from the *Granth*. 'The *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* are a looking-glass to the blind.' 'Brahmā died. With Śiva who lived in Benares all the immortals died.' 'With one book the Brāhmans established the worship of Brahmā. With another they taught the cow-herd to be the supreme spirit. With one they taught the worship of Mahādeva, and with another the worship of evil spirits.'[2] 'The beads are of wood, the gods of stone, and the Jumna of water. Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa are dead. The four Vedas are fictitious stories.' 'If by worshipping stones one can find God, I will worship a mountain. Better than these

[1] Ranade's *Essays on Religious and Social Reform*, p. 245.
[2] The above passages are from the *Bījak*.

stones (idols) are the stones of the flour-mill with which men grind their corn.' Again we have the same voice speaking in condemnation of caste. 'Whose art thou, the Brāhman? Whose am I, the Śūdra? Whose blood am I? Whose milk art thou?'[1]

As we have already indicated, we may conclude that Kabīr was a monotheist. The Rāma or Hari whom he worships is not a god of mythological story. These gods are dead, he says. God was not born in Daśarath's family, nor was Devakī his mother.[2] God is greater than these inventions of men, greater than the thoughts of Him of Hindu or Muḥammadan. 'Kabīr is on the road to God, and is marching on to his end forsaking all partial views.'[3] 'Hari, Brahmā, and Śiva are the three headmen, and each has his own village.'[4] Kabīr turns away from these local conceptions of God's being to Rāma, 'who is obtained for the price of the heart'.[5] 'God whom you seek is near you. He is always near to his devotees, and far from those who do not worship him.'[6] He is found by him who seeks him by the moral path and by quiet meditation. 'Unless you have a forgiving spirit you will not see God.'[7] 'Thou shouldst ride on thy own reflection; thou shouldst put thy foot into the stirrup of tranquillity of mind. Kabīr says, Those are good riders who keep aloof from the Veda and Qur'an.'[8]

It is natural that one who has turned away from the popular mythology and polytheism of the Hindu world about him, and who finds before him for his worship on the one hand the vague Paramātmā of the philosopher, and on the other the remote Allah of Islam, should be conscious, in spite of his spirit of devotion, of his little knowledge of the God to whom he seeks so earnestly to draw near. It is not surprising to find in Kabīr and in the school of thought that he inaugurates,

[1] Westcott, op. cit., pp. 58, 61.
[2] *Bījak*, *Ramaiṇī*, 29.
[3] *Bījak* in Westcott, op. cit., p. 57.
[4] Op. cit., p. 56.
[5] Op. cit., p. 50.
[6] Op. cit., p. 51.
[7] Op. cit., p. 53.
[8] Op. cit., p. 67.

a frequent expression of the divine unknowableness and of the need of mediation in order that God may be brought within the reach of man. The ten *avatāras* are dead. The popular means by which it has been sought to bring God near to man have proved a snare and a deceit. How then can we know 'Him whose name is unutterable'? 'Whose nature Brahmā even did not know, and Śiva, Sanak, and others were unsuccessful in their attempts to know him. Kabīr cries out, "O man, how will you know his attributes?"'[1] 'Kabīr says, To whom shall I explain; the whole world is blind. The true one is beyond reach; falsehood binds all.'[2] Thus it comes that we have in the teaching of Kabīr and of the other members of his school of thought the doctrine of *Śabda* and the doctrine of the *Guru*. The former of these is somewhat difficult for us to understand in the naïve significance that it no doubt had for Kabīr and his followers. We have seen that he rejected the book-learning of the Hindus. Veda and Qur'an alike suggested to him the deceitfulness of the learned. He was, like Muḥammad, an unlettered man, and his teaching was probably communicated orally to his followers. In the *Bījak* he is represented as declaring, 'I neither touched ink nor paper, nor did I take a pen into my hand, to the sages of all four ages Kabīr declared his word by mouth.'[3] *Śabda* is thus the mysterious utterance of speech that conveys knowledge of the unknown and makes wise unto salvation. But it is no doubt especially associated with the name of God—the '*Satnām*', which is recognized in later developments of the doctrine as so powerful. In the *Granth* it is said, 'As the stars at dawn pass away, so the world passes away; these two letters (Rām) do not pass away. Them Kabīr has seized.'[4] 'Kabīr says, I am a lover of the word which has shown me the unseen (God).'[5] This is a far simpler thing on Kabīr's lips than the *Śabda pramāṇa* of the schools of philosophy. He was no philosopher, but speech was obviously a mediation of the un-

[1] *Bījak*, Premchand's translation, p. 29. [2] Ibid., p. 43.
[3] Westcott, p. 175. [4] Ibid., p. 68. [5] Ibid., p. 69.

known, and as such, when that unknown was God, mystic and wonderful. It is not *logos* or reason, but rather the testimony of him who knows, however he may have come to know—and that remains obscure—or again it is the name of God, which is itself the unutterable uttered, the hidden manifested. It seems to be the constraining power of such testimony to change the heart that is referred to in such a passage as this: 'By the power of the word the sin of the world is destroyed. The word makes kings forsake their kingdoms.'[1] By it doubt is destroyed and darkness: it opens the gateway of light.

And again in the *Bījak*, 'Those who construct a raft in the name of Rāma can cross over the ocean of the love of this world.'[2] So in later teaching of the *Panth*, the word is one of the three boats in which souls can safely cross the ocean of life.[3] God is the letterless One; but he has taken form, as it were, in a name, not a name written but a name uttered, 'the word of the true One'.

So in a later book of the *Panth*, the *Amar Mūl*, it is said, 'The unutterable name alone is true, the name that pervades all hearts. When the voice of the word was sounded, the indestructible One took form.'[4] How far this doctrine may have been influenced by the teaching in the Gospel of St. John of the divine *Logos* or Word, 'the light that lighteth every one coming into the world', it is not possible to discuss here. In any case the thought in Kabīr's mind, however dimly apprehended by himself, and however naïve in its expression, is fundamentally akin to that of the Gospel, and is far nearer to it, because more simply religious, than the *logos* doctrines of Heraclitus or of Philo. Kabīr's is an attempt by means of this idea to bring near to men's hearts and minds the remote and dimly apprehended God. The Hindu incarnations are rejected, but the idea of incarnation, of accommodation of the divine to human comprehension, is too deeply rooted in man's sense of his weakness and his need and in his hope of the divine

[1] Westcott, p. 68. [2] Premchand's *Bījak*, p. 8.
[3] Westcott, p. 149. [4] Op. cit., p. 149.

mercy to be rejected. In this form of the doctrine of the *Śabda* it reappears purged of its unworthy mythological associations. The books of the *paṇḍits* only brought bewilderment to the single-hearted seeker. 'Remove doubt, put aside the paper.'[1] The word that comes more immediately from the heart and that speaks to the heart is to take its place.

It is the same instinct that creates the doctrine of the *guru*, a doctrine that we find also in South Indian teaching, and which is so prominent and influential with all the members of the school that derives from Kabīr. 'From heaven and hell', says Kabīr, 'I am freed by the favour of the true *Guru*.' 'Death by which the whole world is frightened, that death is lighted up by the word of the *Guru*.'[2] 'The true *Guru* is a great money-changer, testing the good and the evil; rescuing from the world the good, he takes it under his own protection.'[3] It is obvious at once how such teaching as this was necessary in the case of one who turned away from the book-learning of the *paṇḍits* and the literary tradition, and whose followers were simple, ignorant people. They had need of an oral teacher; and, when God was conceived of as a Spiritual Being, and one remote and hard to find, the importance of the mediation and instruction of a wise spiritual director will at once be evident. Kabīr was himself, as was natural, the chief *Guru* of his followers; and it is not surprising to find him, in consequence, elevated by them presently to the rank of the Creator of the Universe, who is in all and in whom all is contained. 'I am the *Sādhu*,' he is made to say, 'and all *Sādhus* dwell in me.'[4] While it is easy to see the dangers of such a doctrine, dangers which proved themselves real in the case of the Kabīr Panthīs as in that of other sects where the *Guru* or the *Ācārya* was given a similar place, yet at the same time we can recognize here also a testimony to the need of

[1] *Granth* in Westcott, p. 67. [2] Ibid., pp. 71, 72.
[3] *Sākhī* attributed to Kabīr, Westcott, p. 89.
[4] Westcott, p. 146.

a mediator, if the One God, the Supreme, is to be brought 'down to the level of our common lives, down to the beating of our common hearts'.

Other elements that are prominent in the rituals of the Kabīr Panth emphasize still further its theistic character and its kinship with older theistic cults in India and elsewhere throughout the world. These are its rites of initiation and communion. Some of these, such as the drinking of the *Caran mitra*,[1] the water in which the sandals of Kabīr, or the feet of Kabīr's representative on earth, have been washed, are due to the high place of reverence that is accorded to the spiritual teacher. The ceremony of initiation and that of communion, which is called *Jot Prasād*, are similar to those which are to be found, in grosser or more spiritual form, in nearly every religion which seeks to attain fellowship with a personal God. Both in the rites of initiation and in the communion feast betel-leaves are eaten, upon which have been written the secret name of God. This 'is said to represent the body of Kabīr'.[2] The eating of the God, whether he be represented by an animal that is slain or by dough images or, as here, by his name alone written upon a leaf—has always been considered one way of assimilating his spirit. Like the Eleusinian initiate the Kabīr Panthīs could say, 'I have fasted, I have drunk the sacred draught.' But, though in every case such communion ritual has as its end the appropriation of the *mana* or vital power of the god or of the god's representative, in the case of the Kabīr Panthīs that *mana* is realized as something widely removed from the physical energy that the savage seeks when he drinks the blood of the sacred bull.[3] The initiates are exhorted to live holy lives.

[1] This is Hindī for the Sanskrit *caraṇāmṛita.*

[2] Westcott, p. 121.

[3] 'The bull was the chief of magic or sacred animals in Greece, chief because of his enormous strength, his rage, in fine his *mana*, as anthropologists call it, that fine primitive word which comprises force, vitality, prestige, holiness, and power of magic, and which may belong equally to a lion, a chief, a medicine-man, or a battle-axe' (Murray's *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 33). '*Mana* is the magic condition: it is the latent

The food presented to them, which is chiefly coco-nut and the consecrated betel-leaf 'is regarded as Kabīr's special gift, and it is said that all who receive it worthily will obtain eternal life'.[1]

Such a sacramental meal as we have here was no doubt common to many of the *bhakti* cults. In them as in it, whatever may have been the case originally, the flesh and the blood of animals have long since been replaced by a meal of vegetable products and of water. The *Mahāprasāda*, as a means of fellowship with God, has its roots in a deep human instinct, however strange and savage its expression may have often been. That there are close parallels in the Kabīr Panthī rituals with practices that have been followed in the Christian Church in connexion with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is unquestionably true. There is, for example, 'the communion in both kinds', which is exceptional in such sacramental rituals; there is the 'reservation' of a portion of the food specially for the use of the sick; there is a feast following upon the rite similar to the early Christian love-feast.[2] These things, however, though striking, are not without their non-Christian parallels, and leave the question of indebtedness to Christian teaching, which, of course, is quite a possibility, a matter upon which we cannot dogmatize.

When one passes from Kabīr to Nānak one is not conscious of any change of atmosphere. The main ideas of the two teachers are the same, and both teach principles of inwardness and devotion, and commend the way of quietism and of meditation. They are alike in betraying evident traces of both Hindu and Muḥammadan influence, and at the same time they agree in standing apart from these two faiths, criticizing them in the forms in which they see them, and seeking to reconcile them. Both teachers might have said, as Nānak said, 'I am neither Hindu nor Muḥammadan, but a worshipper

power in a person, a thing, even in a word. He who can evoke this energy and make it subserve his ends is a man of talent' (S. Reinach, *Orpheus*, Eng. trans., p. 157).

[1] Westcott, p. 132. [2] Grierson in *J. R. A. S.*, April 1907, p. 326.

of the Nirākāra, of the Formless.' The prominence given to Kabīr in Nānak's *Ādi Granth* is evidence enough of the influence that the earlier teacher had upon him. He is said, also, to have come into personal contact with him when he was a young man of twenty-seven years of age.

Nānak was born in the village of Talwandi, in the district of Lahore, in the year 1469. The Lodi dynasty was at that time ruling in Delhi. His father was a village accountant, and a cultivator, a Hindu and a Kṣatriya by caste. His followers named him Guru Nānak, and they were his disciples or Śiṣya, hence called in the dialect of the country Sikhs. They now number between two and three millions, and since the days of Guru Govind, the tenth in succession from Nānak, they have been famous far more for their warlike qualities than for the quietism and devout spirit of their founder. How this has come about need not here be discussed. No doubt there had entered into Nānak's teaching, along with the milder Hindu doctrine, that which was fitted to arouse the fiercer elements in the nature of its followers. It is sufficient to point out how complete a change has passed over the sect with the lapse of years, and to note that apparently there was not, in the teaching of Nānak, a power sufficient to restrain within the bounds of his doctrines of inwardness and devotion, the natural fierceness of his people's nature, but, on the contrary, that which seemed to stimulate them to violence and fanaticism. Just as the Kṛiṣṇaite sects fell so often into unrestrained self-indulgence and moral corruption, so this community gave way with an equal abandonment to the temptations of the natural man in them. The besetting sin of those who followed those Kṛiṣṇaite teachers—the Caitanyas and Vallabhas—was sensualism; the besetting sin of the Jats and other Punjabis who followed Guru Nānak was ferocity and bigotry. In each case it is evident that the faith they followed had that in it which could stimulate and excite, but not that which could restrain and control, the natural passions of the human heart.

In Nānak's own teaching we find much the same ideas as Kabīr had taught, but carried further, and organized more fully into a system. It is true that neither Kabīr nor Nānak is a systematic thinker. Neither troubles much with the metaphysical bases of his doctrine. An element of weakness in them both is the absence of a fully considered theology. They are eclectic teachers, guided rather by impulse and by intuition than by reflection. The evidence of the influence of Hindu teaching is still greater in Nānak than in Kabīr. It is said, indeed, that he had a Muḥammadan teacher, just as the Muḥammadan Kabīr had a Hindu one; and, further, that in his later days, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca. All the same the influence of Hindu Pantheism is strongly marked in his *Granth*, and he acknowledges his debt to a succession of Vaiṣṇavite saints, among whom are Rāmānanda and the Marāṭha Nāmdev, by including many of their writings in that book.

The legendary story of the Guru's life bears a strange resemblance to those of other Indian sages. In the case of almost every one of them it is accounted a sign of his divine calling that he cannot give his thoughts to any secular occupation. When Nānak's father had sought in vain to persuade him to follow one profession after another—that of a farmer, a shopkeeper, a horse-dealer—his friends concluded that he was suffering from some mental disease. But Nānak diagnosed his own sickness as due to 'the pain of separation from God, the pang of hunger for contemplation of Him'.[1] What most of all made them conclude that he was mad was his declaration—'There is no Hindu and no Muḥammadan.' Presently he was permitted to follow his own desires and then began—as in the case of many of these saints and seekers—his years of wandering. One story that is told of him is claimed also, *mutatis mutandis*, for his predecessor the Marāṭha poet Nāmdev, and has already been related. In the version that is associated with Nānak the scene of the story is laid at

[1] Macauliffe, I, p. 27.

Mecca, and it is the Ka'bah which moved as he moved, proving that the house of God was everywhere. In this story, which has probably been adapted from the earlier legend of the Vaiṣṇavite saint, we have a symbolic representation of Nānak's attitude to the two religions which he sought to combine and to transcend in the higher unity of his message. There is little likelihood that he actually accomplished the Haj; but as he is said to have worn on one of his journeys 'a strange motley of Hindu and Muḥammadan religious habiliments',[1] so in his doctrine Hindu Pantheism enfolded Muḥammadan monotheism, subduing it indeed, but not entirely assimilating it to itself. There was a refractory element in it which was to show its stubborn characteristics in later developments of the sect. He died in 1538 at Khartarpur in the Punjab.

In his teaching we find the same elements as in that of Kabīr, but set forth at greater length and with perhaps less simplicity and epigrammatic force. In the *Japjī*, which is supposed to give an epitome of the doctrine of the sect, and which every Sikh is expected to know by heart, we have less criticism of Hinduism than we find in Kabīr. The attitude rather is that the gods of Hinduism bear testimony to the Formless One, and he transcends them all. His rejection of Hinduism does not involve a positive rejection of its practices. They are of an inferior order to that which he proclaims: they are not sufficient for salvation. He who performs them may obtain 'some little honour'—as it were 'a grain of sesamum seed'.[2] But the true way is the way of inward purity. 'If I please Him, that is my place of pilgrimage to bathe in; if I please Him not, what ablutions shall I make?'[3] The Hindu doctrines of re-birth and of *māyā* are accepted by him, and as in the case of all those who come within the region of their powerful influence, do much to give his teaching its peculiar mould. At the same time the Muḥammadan elements in his thought react upon these doctrines in

[1] Macauliffe, I, p. 58. [2] *Japjī*, XXI, Macauliffe, I, p. 206.
[3] *Japjī*, VI, Macauliffe, I, p. 199.

a way that is strange to Hinduism and scarcely reconcilable with it. Thus he says, 'God made *māyā* by His power; seated He beheld His work with delight.'[1] So again in regard to transmigration: 'Re-birth and deliverance depend on Thy will . . . God Himself knoweth to whom He may give, and He Himself giveth: very few acknowledge this.'[2] 'The Creator who made the world hath decreed transmigration.'[3] As is natural in one who has come under the influence of the austere absolutism of Muḥammadan theology, the will of God is placed by him for the most part above the automatic operation of *karma*. If the translation of the following passage is correctly given by Mr. Macauliffe, we have in it a strange and imperfectly accomplished combination of Musalman and Hindu teaching in this connexion:—

> The recording angels take with them a record of man's acts.
> It is he himself soweth and he himself reapeth.
> Nānak, man suffereth transmigration by God's order.[4]

'God's order' and 'the pre-ordained will of the Commander' have a large place in this teaching, however they are to be reconciled with a doctrine of *karma*. 'By Thy power are honour and dishonour.'[5]

To Muḥammadan influence we must ascribe the clear affirmation of the divine unity. 'There is but one God, whose name is true, the Creator.' He is always 'the omnipotent Creator',[6] but at the same time, in words that recall the *Bhagavadgītā*, He is described as He 'who hath strung the whole world on His string'.[7] Again in another passage of the *Japjī*, which seems in contradiction with what is elsewhere affirmed, we find it stated that 'One *māyā* in union with God' gave birth, among others, to the Creator.[7] It is not surprising in one who is so little of a constructive theologian and

[1] *Asa-ki-war*, *Pauri*, I, Macauliffe, I, p. 219.
[2] *Japjī*, XXV, Macauliffe, I, p. 209.
[3] *Asa-ki-war*, *Sloki*, VIII, Macauliffe, I, p. 229.
[4] *Japjī*, XX, Macauliffe, I, p. 206.
[5] *Asa-ki-war*, *Sloki*, III, Macauliffe, I, p. 221.
[6] *Japjī*, XXX, Macauliffe, I, p. 213.
[7] *Japjī*, XXX, Macauliffe, I, p. 213.

who can make so little claim to speculative power, that echoes of Hindu and Muḥammadan teaching are to be found throughout his writings with little serious attempt to fuse them into a consistent system. Thus the influence of the Upaniṣads is unmistakable in such a line as this: 'By one word Thou didst effect the expansion of the world;'[1] while a well-known passage from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* may have suggested this: 'Divine knowledge is not sought in mere words; to speak concerning it were hard as iron. By God's grace man obtaineth it; skill and order are useless therefore.'[2]

This last passage reminds us of an aspect of Nānak's teaching, which we found also in that of Kabīr—his sense of the transcendence and essential unknowableness of God. This is a thought which, as we saw in the case of the earlier teacher, may well have been impressed upon him, both from the side of the Hindu doctrine of the Ātman, and from that of the high monotheism of the Qur'an. 'Men have grown weary at last', he declares, 'of searching for God's limits.'[3] God is to him pre-eminently the Nirākāra, the Formless One; He is 'inaccessible, inapprehensible'.[4] The *Japjī* opens with an impressive affirmation of His unknowableness. 'By thinking I cannot obtain a conception of Him, even though I think hundreds of thousands of times. Even though I be silent and keep my attention firmly fixed on Him, I cannot preserve silence. The hunger of the hungry for God subsideth not though they obtain the load of the worlds. If a man should have thousands and hundreds of thousands of devices, even one would not assist him in obtaining God.'[5] Perhaps just because of this sense of the hopelessness of obtaining the Formless One, Nānak, while he denounces Hindu idolatry, is much more tolerant than Kabīr of Hindu polytheism. In his time no doubt the theistic sects who 'worshipped according to

[1] *Japjī*, XVI, Macauliffe, I, p. 203.
[2] *Asa-ki-war*, *Sloki*, IV, Macauliffe, I, p. 223.
[3] *Japjī*, XXIII, Macauliffe, I, p. 207.
[4] Macauliffe, I, p. 330.
[5] *Japjī*, I, Macauliffe, I, p. 196.

the instruction of Narad' might be described, as he is said to describe them in one hymn, as 'ignorant fools' who take stones and worship them.[1] At the same time the whole Hindu pantheon is recognized as holding a place beneath the *Nirākāra* and as bearing testimony to Him.[2] 'The *Guru* of the *gurus* is one; the garbs many.'[3] Here as in the case of Kabīr, it is the *Guru* who is the true mediator between man and the distant deity. 'Search not for the true One afar off,' it is said, 'he is in every heart and is known by the *Guru's* instruction.'[4] Along with the mediation of the *Guru* goes a belief, such as we saw in Kabīr also, in the efficacy of the divine name which the *Guru* communicates to the disciple. The name is the mysterious concrete embodiment, as it were, of the deity, and the power of the *Guru* lies in that he can convey it to the seeker. And he only can convey it. The *Guru* and the name are inseparably linked. 'Without the true *Guru* none hath found God,'[5] for 'without the true *Guru* the Name is not obtained'.[6] 'The invisible One is shown in (his) true palace by the *Guru*.'[7] 'If the intellect is defiled with sins: it is washed in the dye of the Name.'[8] These passages which no doubt derive from an early belief in the mysterious power of the magician and his spell[9] could be multiplied almost endlessly. Along with it sometimes goes an incongruous contribution from the fatalistic teaching of Islam. It is perhaps rather in the teachings of the later *Gurus* than in that of Nānak himself that we find this doctrine, that it is only the elect who are saved by the name of Hari and that it is to them alone that the name is conveyed.

[1] Macauliffe, I, p. 326.
[2] *Japjī*, V, IX, XXVI, XXVII.
[3] Trumpp, p. 321.
[4] Macauliffe, I, p. 328.
[5] *Japjī*, Macauliffe, I, p. 226.
[6] *Japjī*, Macauliffe, I, p. 335.
[7] Growse, p. 329.
[8] *Japjī*, XX, Trumpp, p. 7.
[9] 'To the magician knowledge is power; the impulse which drives him is still the desire to extend the influence of his *mana* . . . to its utmost bounds. To form a representation of the structure of nature is to have control over it. To classify things is to name them, and the name of a thing or of a group of things, is its soul; to know their names is to have power over their souls.' Cornford's *From Religion to Philosophy*, p. 141.

The *Guru* in consequence has a place that can hardly remain long lower than that of deity. The Hindu gods are identified with him, and he is even identified with the Supreme Hari. 'This *Guru* of *Gurus* is but one, though he hath various forms.'[1] 'The *Gurudev* is the Lord, the Supreme Lord. . . . The *Gurudev* Hari, says Nānak, I worship.'[2] But whoever is conceived to be the mysterious *Guru* of Nānak, to all after him the *Guru* par excellence is Nānak himself and 'God hath put himself into the true *Guru*'.[3] 'In the perfect *Guru* (God) has become complete.'[4] No doubt Nānak, though he often speaks of himself with humility, believed himself to be an incarnation of the Supreme God. Certainly this is the teaching of his successors in regard to him. 'To make the true *Guru* one's friend,' and serve one's *Guru* in all lowliness, is the way of wisdom. 'I am a sacrifice to my *Guru* a hundred times a day.'[5] The *avatāras* of Hindu legend have here been definitely replaced by the true *Guru*, and devotion to him is the vital centre of the religion. Along with that goes—like the reverence for Śabda in Kabīr—what developed presently into worship of the Granth Sahib, the book that preserved the wisdom of the great *Guru* and of other teachers worthy to be set beside him.

This is how Mr. Macauliffe describes the attitude of the Sikhs to this book.[6] 'The Granth Sahib is to them the embodiment of their *Gurus*, who are regarded as only one

[1] The *Sohila*, Macauliffe, I, p. 258.
[2] Trumpp, p. 377.
[3] *Asa-ki-war*, Macauliffe, I, p. 226.
[4] Growse, p. 64.
[5] *Asa-ki-war*, *Sloki*, I, Macauliffe, I, p. 218.
[6] The present attitude to the *Granth* is indicated by the following account of the worship given to it in the Golden Temple at Amṛitsar: 'Among the Sikhs themselves the shrine and its precincts are known as the Durbar Sahib or "Sacred Audience", and the title owes its origin to the fact that the *Granth* or Sacred Book, is looked upon as a living Person, who daily in this shrine receives his subjects in solemn audience. The book is brought every morning with considerable pomp from the Akālbūnga across the causeway to the shrine and returns at night with similar ceremony. It is installed in the shrine below a canopy, and a *granthī* sits behind it all day, waving a *caurī*, or yak's tail, over it as a servant does over the head of an Indian Prince.' *E. R. E.* I, p. 399².

person, the light of the first *Guru's* soul having been transmitted to each of his successors in turn. The line of the *Gurus* closed with the tenth, Guru Govind Singh. He ordered that the *Granth* should be to his Sikhs as the living *Gurus*. Accordingly the Granth Sahib is kept in silken coverlets, and when it is removed from place to place, is taken on a small couch by Sikhs of good repute.'[1] The fifth *Guru*, Guru Arjun (1563–1606), compiled the most important part of this Scripture, the *Ādi Granth* or 'Original Book', which he completed in 1604.[2] In this he included the hymns of the first five *Gurus* and of other recognized saints such as Rāmānanda, Nāmdev, and Kabīr. His *Granth* is to be distinguished from that of Guru Govind Singh, the tenth and the last of the *Gurus*. With him Sikhism had its euthanasia as 'a religion of spirituality and benevolence'.[3] Of the transformation of the sect into a brotherhood of Puritan warriors, organized rather for battle than for worship, it is not necessary to say much. Those who accepted Guru Govind's rite of *Pahul*, or baptism of the sword, were called *Khālsā*—a word derived from Arabic, *Khalis*, pure—and were to be like their *Guru*, Singhs or lions. The office of *Guru* was now invested in the whole brotherhood, among whom there was to be no longer any caste distinctions. 'The Khālsā is the *Guru* and the *Guru* is the *Khālsā*.'[4]

In spite of the claim of Mr. Macauliffe that 'it would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality'[5] than that of Guru Nānak, it can scarcely be disputed that it is largely an incompletely fused amalgam of ideas and sentiments, contributed alike by Hinduism and Muḥammadanism. In the worship of the *Guru* on the one hand and the *Granth* on the other we seem to see the double influence—that of the personal faith of Muḥammad and that of the impersonal

[1] Macauliffe, I, p. xvi. [2] Ibid., II, p. 64.
[3] H. H. Wilson, *Essays and Lectures Chiefly on the Religion of the Hindus*, II, p. 129.
[4] Macauliffe, I, p. 96. [5] Ibid., p. lv.

Vedānta. We have a similar contradiction in the presentation as the goal of blessedness of absorption in the divine, and yet at the same time of a paradise called *Sach Khand*. Those who are not able to attain to either of these rewards will be re-born on earth. The influence of Muḥammadanism, in contrast with the non-moral Vedānta, is no doubt seen in the strongly ethical note which is distinctive of this religion, and has obtained for its followers the reputation of Puritans. Such a passage as this is typical of many in the *Granth*, and reminds us of similar passages among the sayings of Kabīr: 'Make contentment and modesty thine earrings, self-respect thy wallet, meditation the ashes to seal upon thy body; make association with men thine Ai Panth,[1] and the conquest of thy heart the conquest of the world.'[2] It is a great thing to have declared, 'There is no devotion without virtue.'[3] No doubt the *Guru's* message represents a noble effort at reformation in a time when reformation was supremely needed. Here is how one of his biographers, who lived at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, describes the polytheism and idolatry of Nānak's time: 'Some worshipped the sun or moon, others propitiated the earth, sky, wind, water, or fire, and others again the God of death, while the devotion of many was addressed to cemeteries and cremation grounds.' Similarly Guru Govind is said to have called his Khālsās to forsake the worship of 'idols, cemeteries, or cremation grounds'.[4] Revolt from a repulsive Śaivism was evidently one of the elements that went to the making of this austere and inward faith. Their opposition to caste, mild in the time of the earlier *Gurus*, but thorough in the case of Guru Govind, and the stern prohibition of female infanticide, show it to have been also a genuine movement of social and moral reform.

Of the sects that have sprung up within Sikhism, the two whose aim was to preserve in its present form the religious character of Guru Nānak's reformation, are those of the Udāsīs

[1] A sect of *Jogis*. [2] *Japjī*, XXVIII, Macauliffe, I, p. 212.
[3] *Japjī*, XXI, Macauliffe, I, p. 206. [4] Macauliffe, I, p. 181.

and of the Nirmalas. The former, as the name 'indifferent to the world' suggests, was a sect formed apparently as a protest against the first indications of the secularization of the aims of the sect. Nānak nominated as his successor Guru Angad, but the Udāsīs attached themselves to Nānak's son, Śri Cand, who seems to have lived as a naked ascetic. Their sacred book is the *Ādi Granth* alone. Dehra, where they have a *gurudwāra* or temple, is the seat of a strong body of this sect. The name of the Nirmalas indicates a similar emphasis upon purity and unworldliness. The Udāsīs wear white robes and the Nirmalas red, or yellow—the colour worn by the ordinary Hindu ascetic. In modern times, 'except in the mode of performing public worship and in the profession of benevolent sentiments for all mankind, there is little difference between a Nirmala Sikh and an orthodox Hindu of the Vaiṣṇava sect'.[1] The Akālīs, on the other hand, claiming as they do to have been founded by Guru Govind himself, represent the militant ambitions of the Sikhs in their extreme form. The name Akāl was one of the names of God frequently made use of by the tenth *Guru*. When the fierce passions of the Sikhs were aroused in behalf of their faith, the leadership of the Khālsā largely passed into the hands of these zealots of whom Ranjit Singh himself stood in awe. They claimed the right of summoning the Gurumatā, 'the Council of the *Guru*', a national council which was invested with authority to guide the brotherhood. The Akālīs refused to accept any innovations in the customs of the sect, and for that reason they continued to wear blue clothes and carry some article made of steel upon their persons. Now 'their influence has to a large extent passed away, and some of them have degenerated into mere buffoons'.[2] Of a similar sect of fanatics called Kukas, founded originally by an Udāsī of Rawalpindi, we learn that, having rebelled against the British Government and been suppressed, they 'have subsided into a disreputable sect

[1] Wilson's *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, II, p. 142.
[2] *E. R. E.*, s.v. *Akālīs*, I, p. 269[1].

whose communistic and debauched habits have brought upon them the general reprobation of the Sikh Community'.[1]

There are other sects of the Sikhs which are regarded as heretical. There is that, for example, of the Minas, followers of an elder son of Guru Rām Dās, whom he passed over in favour of his younger son Arjun, and that of the Handalis, who denied the authority of Nānak and set up that of Handal, a Jat convert to Sikhism, in its stead. 'They are now known as Niranjanie, or followers of the bright God (Niranjan).'[2] Of the Suthrē or 'pure ones', it is sufficient to say that 'they are notorious for their drunkenness and debauchery, so that they have become a byword in the Punjab',[3] and equally in Bengal,[4] while the Divānē Sadh or 'mad saints', who are mainly Jats and tanners, agree with the Udāsīs in recognizing only the *Ādi Granth*. There is more interest and profit in tracing the history of other sects which have sprung up all over the country, and which, while less directly related to the Sikhs than these, apparently owe much of their inspiration to Kabīr and Nānak. Four of these out of many that have sprung up, exercised for a while an influence for righteousness, and then become impotent or degenerate, may be briefly referred to here.

Of these one of the earliest is that of the Dādūpanthīs or followers of Dādū (1544–1603), a Brāhman, who, though a native of Ahmedabad, exercised his main influence and left his largest following in Rājputana. Like Kabīr, by whose teaching, as also by that of Nānak, he was evidently greatly influenced, Dādū claimed Rāmānanda as his teacher. His teaching is contained in the *Bāṇī*, a poetic work, which, as in the case of the *Granth*, is worshipped in modern times by his followers. Of these some are 'soldier monks' and others mendicants and ascetics. It will be seen that the development of this sect has been in some ways closely parallel with that

[1] Sir Lepel Griffin's *Ranjit Singh*, p. 62.
[2] Macauliffe, I, p. lxxxiii.
[3] Trumpp, p. cxvii.
[4] *E. R. E.* II, p. 496.

of the Sikhs. Like Kabīr, Dādū represents a popular revolt against the learning and the pride of learning of the orthodox Hindus. 'What avails it to collect a heap of books. . . . Wear not away your lives by studying the Vedas.' He seems to have gone further than his predecessor in rejecting the doctrine of transmigration, 'holding that all possible re-births happen in man's one life on earth.'[1] God is for him the Creator: 'by one word He created all.' He seems to have had more right than either Kabīr or Nānak to declare, 'I am not a Hindu nor a Muḥammadan. I belong to none of the six schools of philosophy. I love the merciful God.' There is on the one hand in his writings a strange sense of the demands of conscience, and on the other a warmer glow of devotion and of desire for God's fellowship than we find in Kabīr and Nānak. In this respect he seems nearer to the Vaiṣṇavite saints, while he has definitely cast aside much in Hinduism that hampered Theism and has accepted much that gives it a more fully ethical note. 'The wife separated from her husband calls day and night and is sad. I call my God, my God, vehemently thirsting.' 'When will He come? When will He come? My beloved, when will He reveal himself?' 'I am bound by many fetters. My soul is helpless. I cannot deliver myself. My beloved alone can.' 'From the beginning to the end of my life I have done no good; ignorance, the love of the world, false pleasure, and forgetfulness have held me.' 'My soul is sorely afflicted because I have forgotten Thee, O God.'[2] There is a close kinship between this saint and the Hebrew psalmists.

The Bābā Lālīs, who come next in order of time, are said to have been founded early in the seventeenth century by Bābā Lāl, who was a Khattrī born in Malwa in Rajputana. He settled near Sirhind in the Punjab, and there founded his sect. The chief historical interest of his teaching consists in the fact that it attracted Dārā Shukoh, the eldest and favourite

[1] *E. R. E.*, s. v. *Dādū*, IV, p. 385².

[2] Most of the quotations and the information in regard to Dādū and the Dādūpanthīs is from the article by Mr. Traill in *E. R. E.* IV. 385 f.

son of the Emperor Shah Jahan. Bābā Lāl appears to have taught a doctrine more deeply dyed of Hinduism than that of Dādū. 'The soul is a particle of the Supreme Soul, just as water contained in a flask is a part of the water of, say, the river Ganges.' On the other hand the Supreme God, who is named Rāma, is directly worshipped with love and adoration. There are no incarnations in this system. 'The feelings of a personal disciple', he said, 'have not been, and cannot be, described, as it is said: "A person asked me what are the sensations of a lover? I replied: When you are a lover you will know."' The sect is said now to be extinct.[1]

The Caran Dāsīs were founded by Caran Dās (1703–82), a Baniya, born at Daharā in Alwar. The adherents of this sect who number apparently only a few thousands are to be found mainly in the Punjab and the United Provinces. A name by which the doctrine is sometimes called, *Śabda-mārga,* indicates its close relationship with that of Kabīr in whose teaching *Śabda* has so prominent a part. At the same time 'so similar are the doctrines taught by Caran Dās to those of Nānak . . . that there are actually Sikhs who at the present day call themselves Caran Dāsīs'.[2] Devotion to the *Guru* and meditation on the name are the two chief means of salvation. Salvation is continued personal existence in fellowship with God after release from transmigration. Here, as elsewhere in the sects of this class, the *Guru* is elevated to a position of superhuman power and sanctity. So much is this so that while 'the believer must know the *Guru* and Hari to be one', 'the *Guru* is mightier than Hari himself, for he protects the sinner from His wrath'.[3] God is worshipped under the names of Hari and Rāma, and also, though apparently not by the founder, 'under the dual form of Rādhā and Kṛiṣṇa'. The

[1] For quotations and references see *E. R. E.*, s. v. *Bābā Lālīs*, II, p. 308.

[2] *E. R. E.*, s. v. *Caran Dāsīs*, III, p. 366 note.

[3] Ibid. The same thing is said by South Indian Vaiṣṇavites of the worship of Rāmānuja as better than the worship of Viṣṇu, for 'while Viṣṇu can both save and damn, Rāmānuja only saves'.

stress laid upon moral conduct is indicated by the ten prohibitions of the sect. Its members are 'not to lie, not to revile, not to speak harshly, not to discourse idly, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to offer violence to any created thing, not to imagine evil, not to cherish hatred, and not to indulge in conceit or pride'.[1] Their scriptures, besides the poems of Caran Dās himself, include the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The founder of the sect forbade idolatry, but as in other instances this position has not been maintained in later days. 'They now even have images in their temples, respect Brāhmans and, like other pious Hindus, fast on the eleventh day of each lunar fortnight.'[2]

There remain the Śiva Nārāyaṇīs, a sect founded early in the eighteenth century by Śiva Nārāyan, a Rajput from Ghāzipur in the United Provinces. Like the Sikhs they worship the Formless One, reject idolatry and reverence their original *Guru*, whom they regard as an incarnation. The sacred book of the sect is called *Śabda Sant* or *Guru Granth*. 'It contains moral precepts and declares that salvation is to be obtained only by unswerving faith in God, control over the passions, and implicit obedience to the teaching of the *Guru*.'[3] The Kabīr Panth was originally in the teaching of Kabīr himself, and largely is still, a protest against caste exclusiveness, but its adherents now are unwilling to admit members of the lowest castes, such as Mehtars, Doms, and Dhobis. These, they consider, should join such a sect as that of the Śiva Nārāyaṇīs.[4] 'All castes are admitted, but most of the disciples come from the lower grades of society, such as the Tatwa, Camar, and Dosādh castes. . . . The ordinary caste restrictions are observed' except in the case of the ascetic members of the sect.[5]

When we review this group of sects, and consider their

[1] Wilson's *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, I, p. 179.
[2] *E. R. E.*, s. v. *Caran Dāsīs*, III, p. 368ˡ.
[3] Gait, *Census Report*, 1901, I, p. 185.
[4] Westcott, p. 108, note 20.
[5] Gait, *Census Report*, 1901, I, p. 185.

history, we find that in spite of the infusion into them of Muḥammadan elements, which seem to make them less vague in their professions of faith, and more virile in adherence to them than were the followers of most of the earlier Vaiṣṇavite cults, there is, nevertheless, the same failure to maintain a high moral and religious standard, the same tendency presently to succumb to temptations that were present in the atmosphere they breathed, and in their own imperfect natures. If they do not fall always into such sensual sins as so often betrayed the adherents of erotic Vaiṣṇavism, they fall into others hardly less gross, such as drunkenness and sloth and indulgence in drugs. One kind of idolatry is discarded only to be replaced presently by the worship of a man or of a book. Caste is denounced, but only soon to make its appearance again within the bounds of the sect or to be replaced by an exclusiveness towards those without that is no less evil.

X

ŚIVA BHAKTI

Of all the deities of the Hindu pantheon, Śiva seems the one least likely to attract a theistic devotion. A large portion of the materials that have gone to his making has its source in the darkest fears and superstitions of the savage. The fact that even about this ghoulish god, more devil than deity, who battens upon corpses, and smears himself with ashes from the burning-ground, has gathered a gracious affection that has been able to remould an object so repulsive nearer to its heart's desire, is in itself a remarkable testimony to the strength in the Indian peoples of the theistic instinct. That Viṣṇu and Kṛiṣṇa have attracted to themselves a spiritual worship, and that they have been the means of awakening such a worship in those who gather to their temples, does not seem so surprising. There is comparatively little to repel in them. They were bright gods, gods of light and life and hope, deliverers, if not yet fully moralized, yet capable of moralization. But the human spirit has surely seldom found material harder to subdue to its purpose of devotion than was Śiva. It is one of the most amazing facts in Indian religion—a religion full of strangeness—that out of the dry ground of Śaivism has sprung a root that has borne the blossom of the devotion of the South Indian Śaivite saints. Though Theism in India has in the end proved so ineffectual, though adverse influences in soil and spiritual climate have rendered it on the whole an abortive growth, yet, with the evidence of its transforming power that these poet saints afford us, we cannot question its depth and its reality within the Indian spirit, nor refuse to hope for it, under more favourable circumstances, results greater and more enduring.

There can be no question that Śiva is in the main not Aryan but aboriginal. That name is nowhere a proper name in the *Ṛig* or the *Atharva Veda*, but is applied as an epithet, 'the auspicious'— to Rudra, the nearest of kin to him among the Vedic deities. From this god of the storm Śiva inherited many characteristics which helped to exalt the malignant demon to something less unworthy of an Aryan's worship.[1] The adoption of this euphemistic name is itself an indication of an attempt to civilize a deity always terrible, but not always worthy of reverence. His aboriginal name may have been Bhairava, 'the fearful', or some similar designation. Śiva, as a matter of fact, like most of the Indian gods, is a very composite product, but one which more than most is made up of widely diverse, and even irreconcilable elements. It need not, indeed, surprise us greatly to find that pantheistic speculation was able to make use of this deity even more, perhaps, than of Viṣṇu as the symbol of the ultimate *Brahman*. Moral attributes, or the lack of them, in its god, mattered neither more nor less to a doctrine in which the god was after all only a label and a superfluity. Śiva by his very force and fury was fitted, not inaptly, to represent that power in the universe which causelessly destroys and causelessly creates. When the conflict arose in South India between Buddhists and Jains, on the one hand, and the adherents of Śiva, on the other, the arguments against the existence of this god that the unbelievers urged were much the same as those which, when we consider the character attributed to him, appear to us to-day so powerful. The Jains and Buddhists represent the claims of the moral sense, and they ask, 'How can this demon be the life of the soul of all?'[2] But these arguments made little impression on the Śaivite philosophers. Their doctrine, as we find it in the polemic carried on in the South

[1] With the development of the Rudra-Śiva god-idea compare the development of Enlil in Babylonian religion. Jastrow's *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 68 ff.

[2] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. 177.

against those opposing systems, was a philosophy closely approximating to the Advaita Vedānta, and in consequence those objections carried little weight which were based upon the character of a deity that was to them secondary and, indeed, superfluous. After all, Śiva was like enough to the wild moods and unmoral activities of nature. It may quite possibly be the case that Śaṅkarācārya belonged, as is alleged, to this sect. To the schools of the philosophers Śiva was as good a name for an otiose deity, as good a label for the deceiving world processes as any other.

It is far more surprising to find the name of Śiva, even in the period of the Upaniṣads, associated with other and more ethical streams of tendency. We have already seen how theistic currents that we discover moving with scanty and uncertain flow through the speculations and intuitions of these books precipitate themselves at last in richer volume into the religion of the *Bhagavadgītā*. There these doctrines gather about the names of Viṣṇu and of Kṛiṣṇa. A similar place to that of the *Gītā* in Vaiṣṇavism is held in Śaivism by the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. In this Upaniṣad, along with much that, just as in the *Gītā,* seems irreconcilable with an ethical Theism, there are certain elements which indicate that the influences at work in that direction in Vaiṣṇavism were not absent from the doctrine and the worship of the rival cult. If we find in this Upaniṣad the names *māyā* and *māyin* they have not yet their Advaita significance.[1] Always in Śaivism, even more than in Vaiṣṇavism, there is implied a sense of the world's unreality in comparison with the reality of spirit, a feeling which is, indeed, universal in Indian thought—while at the same time to a still greater degree there is implied a sense of the divine transcendence. Already, indeed, in the *Ṛig Veda,* Rudra is the 'great Asura of heaven',[2] and, as such, he is the 'possessor of occult power' (*māyā*).[3] In the *Śvetāśvatara* he has definitely assigned to him the rôle, which, in later times,

[1] *Śvet. Up.* IV. 9. [2] *R. V.* II. 1. 6.
[3] Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology*, p. 156.

was generally associated with the name of Śiva, of the deity of agnosticism. 'No one has grasped him above or across, or in the middle. There is no image of him whose name is Great Glory.'[1] This, as well as other things in this Upaniṣad, reminds us of the attitude of Buddhism. As in the case of Buddhism the state of deliverance, 'when the light has risen', is a state alike 'beyond existence and non-existence'.[2] At the same time the theistic note is distinctly struck in the designation of the all-pervading Ātman as not only Śiva, but Bhagavat,[3] and in the emphasis that is placed, on the one hand, upon his perception by the heart as well as by the mind,[4] and, on the other, upon man's need, if he would perceive him, of the grace of the Creator.[5] But especially significant is the explicit declaration in the final verse of this Upaniṣad that, in order that the truths there enunciated may 'shine forth indeed', they must be told 'to a high-minded man who feels the highest devotion (*bhakti*) for God and for his *guru* as for God'.[6] Here for the first time in connexion with Śaivism the claims of *bhakti*—and implicitly the claims of theistic religion—are authoritatively affirmed. However indistinguishable in its phraseology the teaching of this Upaniṣad may seem at times to be from that of those that present a pure Advaita doctrine, this affirmation definitely demonstrates that its face is turned to another direction. We may not have here the fully articulated *bhakti* of the later theologians, but we have enough to indicate that the supreme spirit is for it a personal Being who wins the worship of the heart.[7] This Upaniṣad, it is true, like the *Gītā*, speaks with a double tongue, and its philosophy is really at variance with its religion; but, with whatever inconsistency, the glow of the heart which it demands of the disciple, and which it prescribes as necessary for his attainment of immortality, proclaims it as a theistic scripture.

In the *Mahābhārata* there is little to indicate the place

[1] *Śvet. Up.* IV. 19. [2] Ibid., IV. 18. [3] Ibid., III. 11.
[4] Ibid., III. 13; IV. 20. [5] Ibid., III. 20. [6] Ibid., VI. 23.
[7] *S. B. E.* XV, p. xxxiv.

that Śiva was to obtain in the worship of South Indian saints of a later day. We find his name extolled by the sectary in opposition to that of Viṣṇu; we find him claimed as the manifestation of the All-god, in echo of a like claim made by the adherents of the rival deity. But there is little that is of religious value or interest in such conflicts of the sects. These things are the doings of the priest or of the philosopher, and may have little enough of faith behind them. Two passages of the Epic may, however, be referred to as indicating the character of Śiva-worship in its more inward aspect, apart from its more philosophic doctrines on the one hand, and its orgiastic ritual on the other. In one passage Śiva, in agreement with the view suggested already in the *Śvetāśvatara*, and referred to above, is described as the inconceivable one, who is 'beyond the comprehension of all gods'.[1] The fact that this agnostic attitude has persisted down to modern times among the worshippers of Śiva is indicated by the existence of those Śaivite sects that are called Alakhnāmis or Alakhgīrs, as those who 'call upon the name of the Unseeable'.[2] Such a conception would at once help to exalt the god, and at the same time would hinder the development of his worship into a truly ethical Theism. It would be easier to associate so vague a deity with the Advaita doctrine, as indeed Śiva frequently was associated, than with a worship which requires love and obedience. To love God and to trust Him it is necessary that one in some measure at least should know Him. Further on, in the same passage of the *Mahābhārata*, which designates Śiva as the Unknowable his 'form' is said to be the *liṅga*.[3] Perhaps the adoption of this symbol, which may be much more ancient than this passage, for a god of whom 'there is no image'[4] may have been due to an attempt to express the inexpressible. Repulsive as the phallic emblem may appear to us, and as it no doubt was in its religious

[1] *Mbh.* VII. 202: 79, 71.
[2] See *E. R. E.* I, p. 276, s. v. *Alakhnāmis.*
[3] *Mbh.* VII. 202: 94, 97.
[4] *Śvet. Up.* IV. 19.

origin, it is possible that we have it here made use of as the medium of a protest—which we see later repeating itself in the case of the Liṅgāyats—against idolatry.[1] But the half may prove the enemy of the whole. The symbol was unworthy enough at best, and was too easily adopted as a mere fetish by the ignorant.

But it was in South India that Śaivism entered most fully into its own, and it is there that it has disclosed itself at its best, and also, perhaps, at its worst. That this should be the case is not surprising, if Śaivism is the most largely aboriginal of the Indian cults, since a larger aboriginal element has survived in the South than in any other part of India. The old Dravidian worship, which was probably for the most part offered to demonic powers, was never here completely overthrown. The Aryan victor was, indeed, ultimately vanquished and his bright gods driven from the field by those old deities or demons of the underworld. When Brāhmanic influences began to make themselves felt in this part of India it was with the name of Rudra-Śiva that this demonolatry could most easily be assimilated. If the conjecture that the Heracles of Megasthenes was, not Kṛiṣṇa, as has been generally supposed, but Śiva, be well-founded, then it would appear that already in the fourth century B.C. this religion was established throughout South India. It is possible that we have in the same connexion an indication that the Pāndyan dynasty was originally Śaivite, as certainly the Chola dynasty was at a later date. In the third century B.C. Buddhism was also introduced by Buddhist missionaries, while Jainism appears early in the Christian era already widely spread throughout the South, and later numbered the Pāndya kings among its adherents. By the seventh century A.D., when Hiuen Tsang travelled in India, Buddhism was rapidly disappearing, while Śaivism, and especially Jainism, were the popular faiths in

[1] Compare the worship of Ashur in Assyrian religion under the form of a winged disk and the advance that this implied towards a more spiritual religion. Jastrow's *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 51, 52.

this region. In the struggle for predominance between these rivals, which continued for several centuries, the victory rested with Śaivism. It was, in fact, a conflict between the religious and the non-religious spirit, and, however able and erudite the Jain champions might be, the strength of religion in the Hindu heart was too great for them. Whether it was Vaiṣṇavism, now also established among the South Indian cults, or Śaivism that championed the cause of faith, the worldly wisdom of the Jain was sure to be ultimately worsted. This was made the more certain in the case of Śaivism by two reinforcements that came to it, and strengthened it in different and complementary ways. These were, on the one hand, the formulation of its doctrines in the system of the Śaiva Siddhānta, and, on the other, a great revival of devotion within its borders due to a remarkable group of saints and apostles.

At times of controversy, especially, it is a great strength to any faith to have the support of an articulated system. It is then able, in opposition to its rivals, to appeal to reason. A philosophy or a formulated theology brings along with it to any religion an immense enhancement of prestige. Its emergence generally implies besides that the cult in question, which may have begun as a movement in the hearts of the common people, perhaps as an effort of revolt from the established Church, has now won a place among the more cautious and the more reflective. Śaivism, indeed, as the existence of the *Śvetāśvatara* reminds us, had long ago found an entrance among the thinkers. But that was in more northern regions. In South India it had to begin anew from the beginning—purifying itself as best it might from gross superstition, building itself up to better things upon the foundation of a sincere devotion. When it was able to appropriate to itself a doctrinal system it obtained it, in the opinion of some scholars, from Śaivite thinkers whose home was in the far north of India. Just as, later, Rāmānanda was to bear from the South a torch of devotion that was to spread its heat and light far and wide throughout the North, so it may be that at this earlier period

by a gift from the north to the south this debt was by anticipation repaid. It was a different gift—one of the intellect, whereas the other was of the heart—but its effect was similar, for it helped to secure for theistic religion the victory in the struggle with Jainism.

If this view is well founded it was from Kāshmīr that South Indian Theism received this reinforcement. The links in the connexion of the Śaivite theology of that far northern province with the religion that was struggling for its life in the south it is impossible now to discover. The founder of the Kāshmīr school of Śaivism, which, in all probability, owed much to the *Śvetāśvatara*, is said to have been Vasugupta. Between the ninth and the eleventh centuries of the Christian era various teachers of Śaivite doctrine arose, representing, no doubt, different shades of approximation to the orthodox Advaita. Of these one of the most famous is Abhinavagupta, who flourished at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries, and whose teaching is said to be 'in all essentials identical with the orthodox Siddhāntam of the Dravidian South'.[1] In the opinion of Dr. L. D. Barnett those theological ideas of the north 'following the natural geographical route, filtered down southwards' till they reached Kanara where, thus reinforced, the old Śaivite religion rose in revolt against the dominant Jainism, and in the middle of the twelfth century brought its supremacy to an end. This is supposed to have taken place in the time of Basava, minister about 1160–70 to the Kalachuri king, Bijjala of Kalyānpura. The effect of this revolt was the establishment in Kanara of the Liṅgāyat faith, but the influence of the Kāshmīr doctrine did not end here. The new energy that it awakened in Śaivism in Kanara spread still further south, and produced in the Tamil country that Śaiva Siddhānta, which is claimed by Dr. Pope, even as Vaiṣṇavism is claimed by other students, 'as the most elaborate, influential, and undoubtedly

[1] L. D. Barnett in *Le Muséon*, X, p. 272.

the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India.'[1]

We need not suppose, even if this very doubtful debt were proved, that this religious philosophy was altogether borrowed from those northern theologians. There are said to have been twenty-eight *Āgamas*, which contained the principles of Śaivism;[2] and, if this tradition is at all reliable, the inference is that, however the Śaiva Siddhānta may have been reinforced from the north, it had already arisen independently in the south, and had for some generations been engaging the minds of Dravidian thinkers. Of these *Āgamas*, which are said by Māṇikka-vāśagar, who lived in the tenth or eleventh century, to have been caused to appear by the grace of Śiva, little or nothing is known. The systematic account of the Śaiva Siddhānta, which Meykaṇḍer gives in his *Śiva-ñāna-bōdham*,[3] composed about the beginning of the thirteenth century, is, however, a paraphrase of 'a dozen Sanskrit stanzas alleged to form part of the *Raurāgama*'.[4] From these documents, as well as from the works of Aruṇandi and Umāpati, who belong to the fourteenth century, and from the commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, by Śrīkaṇṭha, who is said to have been Śrī Śaṅkarācarya's 'senior and contemporary',[5] we can judge of the theistic character of this doctrine, and how far it was able to free itself from the Advaita influences so strong in the north.

Whether in Kāshmīr, or in the Tamil south, the Śaiva system centres round a trinity of names, *Pati*, the Lord, *paśu*, the flock, and *pāśa*, the bond. These names carry us back to the ancient sources of the religion, reminding us that Rudra in the Vedic Hymns is *paśupati*, and reminding us also of

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. lxxiv.

[2] We need not, however, accept the tradition that the total number of verses in them was 20, 100, 010, 193, 884, 000, as Nija-guna-śiva-yogin is said to allege. *The Search after God* (*Brahma Mīmāṃsā*), p. 10.

[3] Or *Śiva-jñāna-bodha*.

[4] L. D. Barnett in *Le Muséon*, X, p. 272.

[5] *The Search after God* (*Brahma Mīmāṃsā*), p. 24. This is a translation of part of a commentary on Nilkaṇṭha's *Bhāṣya* on the *Vedāntā Sūtras*.

what is of better promise for an ethical Theism, that in the same poems Varuṇa, as the moral Governor, is said to lay fetters (*pāśa*) upon the sinner. Śiva is the Lord, 'exalted above the Abyss'—that is, above all that partakes of *māyā*—and yet 'abiding in all that moves and all that moves not'.[1] 'That souls may reach his state, his *Śakti* gathers them in. Our Lord is, nevertheless, one and indivisible.'[2] The Supreme Divinity manifests himself and operates in the universe through his energy, which is to Śiva as light is to the sun. Thus, as so often in other systems, it is sought by a doctrine of emanation to bridge the gulf between the infinite and the finite. The 'flock' consists of innumerable souls, who are under the bondage of a three-fold fetter—*āṇavam* or darkness, *māyā*, which to the southern Śaivite, at least, is generally not illusion but matter, 'the material of all embodiment',[3] and *karma*. 'As an earthen vessel has the potter as its first cause, the clay as its material cause, and as its instrumental cause the potter's staff and wheel, so the universe has *māya* for its material cause, the *śakti* of Śiva for its instrumental cause, and the Lord Śiva himself as its first cause.'[4] This Śiva is the 'sole Redeemer of souls'.[5] According to the teaching of Abhinavagupta there are three classes of those who have obtained deliverance, the *para muktas*, who are 'assimilated to the supreme Śiva', the *apara muktas*, united to him in his manifested phase, and the *jīvan muktas*, who are still in the body.[6] 'Redemption (*mokṣa*)', says this teacher, 'is the revelation of the powers of Self when the bond of ignorance is burst.' 'There is nothing distinct from the redeemed to which he should offer praise or oblation.' 'He worships with the pure substance of reflection on the Self the blessed deity who is the supreme reality.'[7] In its formulation in the South more emphasis seems to have been laid upon the

[1] Abhinavagupta's *Paramārthasāra*, translated by L. D. Barnett in *J. R. A. S.*, July 1910.

[2] Umāpati in Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. lxxvii.

[3] Pope's *Nāladiyār*, chap. xi.

[4] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. lxvi.

[5] *The Search after God* (*Brahma Mīmāṃsā*), p. 4.

[6] *Le Muséon*, X, p. 276.

[7] *J. R. A. S.*, July 1910.

fact that in the state of emancipation there is 'conscious, full enjoyment of Śiva's presence'[1] than in the northern doctrine. 'In supreme felicity', says Umāpati, 'thou shalt be one with the Lord.' But, he goes on, 'the soul is not merged in the Supreme, for if they become one, both disappear; if they remain two there is no fruition; therefore there is union and non-union.'[2]

The difference between the doctrine of the Kāshmīr thinkers and that of the Śaivite philosophers of the south seems to be similar to that which we find to separate the colder thought of the Upaniṣads from later theistic speculation. This difference is due in both cases, no doubt, to the atmosphere in which the philosophy took shape. In the midst of the fervour of devotion of the southern saints the speculations of the thinkers found a new warmth and colour. More emphasis was laid on the personality of the Supreme Deity and on the conscious bliss of those who attain to deliverance. This is especially seen in the large place that is given in the southern religion, and in its theology to the thought of the grace of Śiva. 'In the Siddhānta', says Dr. Pope, 'very great stress is laid upon the idea that all embodiment, while it is painful and to be got rid of as soon as possible, is yet a gracious appointment of Śiva, wrought out through *śakti* for the salvation of the human soul, through the destruction of deeds, which are the root of all evil to mankind.'[3] In this system, as, we have seen, he is elsewhere also, Śiva is the Unknowable, 'whom the heavenly ones see not'.[4] But he manifests himself in his gracious, emancipating *śakti*. Only by the grace of the great *Guru* does the soul see and seeing, 'hide itself in the mystic light of wisdom'. 'The fainting soul will resort to the shadow of Grace of its own accord.'[5] 'To those who draw not nigh, he gives no boon; to those who draw nigh, all good; the great Śaṅkara knows no dislike.'[6] This doctrine

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. xliv.
[2] Op. cit., p. lvii.
[3] Op. cit., p. 254.
[4] Umāpati in op. cit., p. lxxix.
[5] Op. cit., liii.
[6] Op. cit., p. lxxix.

of grace supplies the chief incentive to devotion in this system, and corresponding to it is the response of *bhakti* on the part of the worshipping soul. We have seen that in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* the attitude of *bhakti* is prescribed as necessary to a right understanding of its teaching, and still more is this recognized as necessary in this later system. 'The soul gives sight to the eyes; he who gives sight to the soul is Śiva; therefore one should worship in supreme love him who does kindness to the soul.'[1]

But the doctrine of the Śaiva Siddhānta alone could hardly have obtained for southern Śaivism so complete a victory over Buddhism and Jainism. Alongside of this intellectual reinforcement there sprang up about this time a remarkable spirit of devotion which, through the great saints and poets of this period, gave to Śaivism, one cannot doubt, more than anything else did, the strength by which it prevailed over its cold and sterile rivals. 'No cult in the world', says Dr. Barnett, 'has produced a richer devotional literature or one more instinct with brilliance of imagination, fervour of feeling, and grace of expression.'[2] The exact period of this efflorescence of the South Indian religious spirit is extremely doubtful. It cannot be determined within more definite limits than the seventh to the eleventh centuries. This was a time, not only of Śaivite, but of Vaiṣṇavite revival. The sixty-three Śaiva saints of tradition had as contemporaries, it is probable, some of the Vaiṣṇavite Āḷvārs, and that, apparently, without any keen antagonism being aroused between them. That antagonism came later when their common enemy, the Jain, had been overcome. The greatest of the poet-saints who have exercised so enduring an influence upon this South Indian faith is Māṇikka-vāśagar, whose *Tiruvāśagam* or 'Sacred Utterances' is full of the most intense religious feeling. Here we have the doctrines of the Śaiva Siddhānta fused into passionate experience in the heart of a worshipper of Śiva. Their author

[1] Meykaṇḍar in Barnett's *Heart of India*, p. 80.
[2] *Heart of India*, p. 82.

is said to have been prime minister to a Pāndyan king, and probably flourished in the tenth or eleventh century of the Christian era, though Dr. Pope seems sometimes inclined to place him as early as the seventh or eighth century. He went, the story goes, like Saul, to seek, not his father's asses, but horses for the king, but, like Saul, he found instead a kingdom, though in his case a kingdom of the spirit. Śiva himself, surrounded by a great company of his saints, revealed himself to him in the form of a venerable *guru*, and his errand was forgotten, and the world renounced. 'He has gone from the Council, and put on the shroud,' and he journeys in pilgrimage from town to town, worshipping at every shrine, and composing songs in celebration of the various seats of Śiva worship and their god. 'The success of Māṇikka-vāśagar in reviving Śaivism,' says Dr. Pope,[1] 'which seems to have been then almost extinct, was immediate, and we may say permanent. . . . From his time dates the foundation of that vast multitude of Śaiva shrines which constitute a peculiar feature of the Tamil country.'

In the legend of Māṇikka-vāśagar's conversion, the divine *Guru*, it is said, held in his hand a book which proves to be the *Śiva-ñāna-bōdham* of Meykaṇḍar. As a matter of fact, this manual of the Śaiva Siddhānta did not come into existence for at least two centuries after the time of the Śaivite saint and poet. The period of inspiration precedes the period of reflection; the experience of the saint furnishes the material for the doctrinal system of the theologian. Already in his poems we find expressed in the language of the heart those views of the relation of the soul to God and to the world that the schoolmen formulated later into a religious philosophy. For Māṇikka-vāśagar, as for so many saints, the central point in his religious life to which he continually returns for a renewal of his inspiration is his conversion. It is a continually recurring theme for praise throughout his hymns, a constantly recurring source of encouragement when he falls into despair.

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. xxxiii.

Throughout his poems there is such an accent of humility and adoration, such a sense of his unworthiness and of the divine grace, as seems to bring him very near indeed to the spirit of the Christian saints. No doubt there are, at the same time, deep differences, which the common ardour of expression hides. How far the sense of his unworthiness springs solely from a moral root, how far the greatness of his god is a purely moral supremacy, how far the sense of the divine presence is spiritual or largely sensuous—these questions need not here be considered, nor can their answers, whatever they may be, detract greatly from the deep affinity of saints, apparently so alien from each other in many respects. Again and again we find Māṇikka-vāśagar giving utterance to such experiences as are common to all devout souls who have sought God sincerely and have in some measure found Him.

> 'These gods are gods indeed,'—'These others are the gods,' men wrangling say; and thus
> False gods they talk about and rant and rave upon this earthly stage. And I
> No piety could boast: that earthly bonds might cease to cling, to him I clung.
> To him, the god of all true gods, go thou, and breathe his praise, O humming-bee.[1]

Dr. Pope, in his translation of the *Tiruvāśagam*, by the headings he places to paragraphs of the poem indicates how close he finds the affinity to be between these utterances of a sincere devotion, and those of the Christian religious experience. 'Longing for grace alone', 'Without thy presence I pine', 'Deadness of soul', 'God all in all', 'I am thine, save me', 'His love demands my all'—these are a few taken at random, and they are sufficient by themselves to indicate that with all the strange mythology that weaves its fantastic forms across the poems, and that perplexes and repels a Western reader, we have here the essential note of a deeply devout and a truly ethical Theism.

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, pp. 143, 144.

We have seen that a note of Śaivism has always been the unknowableness of God. The Vaiṣṇavite followers of the *bhakti mārga* often affirm this no less strongly, but like Tulsī Dās they argue that, just because God is beyond the reach of thought and act and speech, the one way of salvation for men is in the worship of such an incarnation of the Supreme Deity as Rāma. Similarly, though Śaivism has had no place for such incarnations as we find within the rival system, Māṇikka-vāśagar is never weary of claiming that Śiva has come near to him in his grace as the *guru* and revealed himself.

> Māl (Viṣṇu), Ayan, all the gods and sciences divine
> His essence cannot pierce. This Being rare drew near to me;
> In love he thrilled my soul.[1]

Again,

> The 'Mount' (Śiva) that Māl knew not and Ayan saw not—we can know.[2]

There is no limit to the ecstasy with which he describes the effect of this revelation of grace.

> Sire, as in union strict, thou mad'st me thine; on me didst look, didst draw me near;
> And when it seemed I ne'er could be with thee made one—when naught of thine was mine—
> And naught of mine was thine—me to thy feet thy love
> In mystic union joined, Lord of the heavenly land.—'Tis height of blessedness.[3]

It is hardly necessary to multiply illustrations of the fervent spirit of this worshipper of Śiva. It is a constant marvel to note how the heat of his devotion is able to transmute to its purposes of adoration even the repellent aspects of the god. His descriptions of him seem at times to touch the very brink of all we hate. This is he who 'wears the chaplet of skulls'; he is the 'maniac';

> A dancing snake his jewel, tiger-skin his robe,
> A form with ashes smeared he wears.[4]

A favourite epithet is 'the black-throated one'. But this

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. 157.
[2] Op. cit., p. 106.
[3] Op. cit., p. 72.
[4] Op. cit., p. 195.

epithet, as a matter of fact, strange as it seems to us, is what especially suggests to his devotee the grace of Śiva, and it constantly recurs in his poems as a motive to praise and worship. What to the Vaiṣṇavite are the 'three steps' of Viṣṇu, that to the Śaivite is the story of how this god drank the *hālahāla* poison and so made his throat for ever black. In both cases the story has been laid hold of by the instinct of the devout heart as a symbol of the divine grace that saves. In order that he might deliver the gods, when a stream of black and deadly poison flowed forth at the churning of the Sea of Milk, Śiva of his own will drank it up and gave to them instead the ambrosia that followed. Thus the Śaivite worships with gratitude and adoration a god who has suffered for others, and the black throat is for him a constant reminder of his grace.

> Thou mad'st me thine; didst fiery poison eat, pitying poor souls,
> That I might thine ambrosia taste.—I, meanest one.[1]

By the help of such a thought as that the South Indian worshipper has been able to transform the strange appearance of this pre-Aryan divinity, so demoniacal in many of his aspects, into a gracious being whom his heart can love. It is at least a testimony to the amazing power of the religious passion surging up within these southern saints, a passion impossible to content with less in God than the grace that condescends and suffers, with less than a love correspondent to the love that moves itself. When 'the Brāhman' represented to this seeker that 'the way of penance is supreme', or when the 'haughty Vedant creed unreal came', he turned away unsatisfied. Then, he says, 'Lest I should go astray he laid his hand on me'.[2] This testimony to a real spiritual experience, a real movement of the divine love to meet the human, is expressed again and again throughout these lyrics with a manifest sincerity. The 'law of trusting love'[3] finds its fulfilment and 'his love that fails not day by day still

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. 195. [2] Op. cit., p. 34.
[3] Op. cit., p. 33.

burgeons forth'.[1] Certainly these poems, with all that is strange and repellent in the symbols that are employed in them to represent the deity, seem to echo a theistic experience as genuine as it is intense.

The victory of Śaivism over both Buddhism and Jainism is thus mainly to be attributed to two converging lines of reinforcement, one intellectual, coming, perhaps, ultimately from the Kāshmīr Śaivite philosophers, the other indigenous, issuing from the sense of their own religious needs. Another influence in the same direction which the Śaivite shared with the Vaiṣṇavite is that of the *Bhagavadgītā*. 'The influence of the *Gītā*', says Dr. Pope, 'upon South India as a doctrinal manual and as a great and inspiring poem has been and is incalculably great.'[2] He finds traces of this influence in every part of Māṇikka-vāśagar's poems. We even find in one of the philosophical books of Śaivism a quotation from the *Gītā* so linked on to one from a Śaivite scripture that the teaching of the former as to the Paramātman—Vaiṣṇavite as it in reality is—is directly associated with the name of Śiva.[3] Thus the *Gītā*, even in this alien environment, vindicates itself as the greatest and most influential of all Indian theistic scriptures.

Māṇikka-vāśagar was an orthodox Śaivite and represents at its highest the Śaivite *bhakti* of Southern India. There were others, however, who, outside the dominant Church, cherished and proclaimed an inward and monotheistic faith. In the *Śiva-vākyam*, a collection of 'Śiva speeches' by various poets, there are some remarkable expressions of such a religious experience. In one of these the poet turns away from idols and from temples to another shrine, 'the mind within his breast'. 'And thus,' he says, 'where'er I go, I ever worship God.'[4] Another example may be quoted of this devotion that revolts from ritual tradition and orthodoxy and finds its way by its own fervour to the feet of God.

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. 35. [2] Op. cit., p. lxvi, note.
[3] Appāya's commentary in *The Search after God*, pp. 49, 50.
[4] L. D. Barnett's *Heart of India*, p. 92.

When thou didst make me thou didst know my all:
But I knew not of thee. 'Twas not till light
From thee brought understanding of thy ways
That I could know. But now where'er I sit,
Or walk, or stand, thou art for ever near.
Can I forget thee? Thou art mine, and I
Am only thine. E'en with these eyes I see,
And with my heart perceive, that thou art come
To me as lightning from the lowering sky.
If thy poor heart but choose the better part,
And in this path doth worship only God,
His heart will stoop to thine, will take it up
And make it his. One heart shall serve for both.[1]

As one reads these stanzas, as has been remarked by Dr. Barnett, 'one is tempted to wonder whether "Śiva-vākyar" was not a worshipper at the local Christian church'.

Along with these more spiritual movements there occurred in the northern district of Kanara a religious revolt, less pure probably in the motives that inspired it, certainly less worthy in its results. Mention has already been made of Basava, minister of King Bijjala of Kalyāna, who was the leader in a Śaivite revival which did much to overthrow the power of Jainism, hitherto dominant in that region. He flourished in the latter part of the twelfth century. Associated with him in this religious reformation there seems to have been another Brāhman called Rāmayya who, in an inscription dated about 1200, is called 'Ekāntạda Rāmayya', 'because he was an ardent and devoted worshipper of Śiva'.[2] 'Basava was the Luther, Rāmayya the Erasmus' of the new cult. It is not easy to form any certain estimate of the religious character of this Vīra Śaivite or Liṅgāyat movement, as it was called. It was, no doubt, in its inception something worthier than it appears to-day. Its followers now form only another among the many Hindu castes, with little to distinguish them from the rest except their strong opposition to Brāhman privilege.

[1] Barnett's *Heart of India*, p. 92.
[2] Thurston and Rangachari's *Castes and Tribes of South India*, s.v. *Lingayet*.

They also permit widow-remarriage and are opposed to child-marriage. Liṅgāyats acknowledge Śiva alone and place upon the *liṅga*, his symbol, a faith that in the case of the most of the modern adherents of the sect leaves little room for spiritual worship. One can see, however, in their rejection of the efficacy of sacrifices, penances, pilgrimages, and fasts, indications that in its origin this may have been a movement towards a purer and more inward faith. If it is the case that the Vīra Śaivites were a 'peaceful race of Hindu Puritans', they probably in the spirituality of their worship and its ethical character represented—to begin with at least—a theistic religion, such as was the Śiva *bhakti* of the further south, but less emotional and devout. It was as such, no doubt, that this sect contended with and overcame the dominant Jainism. At the same time it was the more likely to become corrupt and to fall to the common level of Hindu formalism and superstition because of its lack of the fervour of *bhakti* which gave such warmth and energy to the faith of Māṇikka-vāśagar. To the Liṅgāyat salvation seems to have meant absorption into, or attainment of an impersonal union with, the deity. In this respect this movement seems to have been even from the beginning non-theistic, and a theist may discover in that fact the secret of its religious barrenness in contrast with the Śaivism of the Tamil land, as well as the explanation of the rapidity and completeness with which it appears to have fallen into decay.

In this sect and to a less extent in the religion of the Śaivite saints of the Tamil land we find those spiritual and ethical instincts which are generally associated with Theism engaged in a conflict with anti-theistic influences everywhere powerful in India and always in the end victorious. Of these one is that tendency to formalism and superstition, which everywhere, as soon as the first fervour of a movement of religious revival has begun to fail, bears down to earth again the human spirit, and which seems to press upon the religious life of India especially with a weight heavy as frost and deep,

we may say, even as death. Another antagonist is the influence, peculiar to India, of a philosophy invincibly hostile to personal religion and to moral ardour, and extraordinarily tenacious of its grasp upon the Indian spirit. It is evident that the Lingāyat reform movement made little headway against these adverse forces and soon succumbed to them. The tides of Vedāntism and of superstition soon reduced this region too to the normal level of Indian religious life, and only a point of rock projecting here and there above the waste of waters—its spirit of antagonism to Brāhman claims, for example—remains to mark the place where once there was a real insurgence of the conscience and the heart. Its work was done when it helped in the overthrow of Buddhism and of Jainism. The devotion of the Tamil saints has had a more abiding influence, for the reason that its roots went deeper into the heart, and that, as a result, it found expression in poetry which continues to bear its witness to later generations and to find a response in other hearts. But here too the subtle Vedānta doctrine in the end prevails. The fervour of devotion is able for an ardent moment to preserve the equilibrium of being and non-being in *mukti*, of absorption and bliss. It can rejoice in 'the way which is neither single nor two-fold'.[1] But when the emotion passes, the logic of the understanding makes its claims. Then, as regards its goal at least, the doctrine of the Śaiva Siddhānta becomes indistinguishable from that of the Vedānta. The grace of Śiva remains and the Great Lord is still a personal deity, but the individual self attains deliverance by being absorbed into the Supreme and Selfless One. 'Where the soul stood before, Śiva stands there in all his glory, the soul's individuality being destroyed.'[2] Thus here as everywhere in India the 'haughty Vedānt creed'[3] seems in the end to triumph and the Theism that was once so ardent pales to an ineffectual spectre.

[1] *Sivan Seyal*, translated by Clayton in *Madras Christian College Magazine*, vol. xvii, p. 308.
[2] *Tiruvunthiar* (Commentary) in *Siddhānta Deepika*, vol. VIII, p. 190.
[3] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. 33.

XI

THE ŚĀKTA SECT

We have already seen that in the most erotic types of Vaiṣṇavism the relation of the worshipper to the god is represented as that of a mistress to her lover. The worshippers are to be Rādhās to the sole male Kṛiṣṇa. Similar in its use of the sexual emotions for religious ends is the Śakti worship which may be described as a parallel morbid growth on the side of Śaivism to the *mādhurya* of erotic Vaiṣṇavism. The intrusion of such emotions within the sphere of religion is no uncommon phenomenon, but nowhere, perhaps, has it been carried to such an extreme or systematized with such elaboration as in India and in the literature of the Tantras.

The worship of the earth as a mother, and the grouping into pairs of gods viewed specially in the aspect of Creators, or the combination within the person of one such deity of the functions of both the sexes, are religious phenomena that were, no doubt, very widely spread in early times and that suggest themselves naturally enough to primitive thought. The combination Dyāvāpṛithivī, for example, is one which can be paralleled in many religious contexts besides that of India. It is of interest to note that in a Brāhmaṇa of the *Yajur Veda* Prajāpati is androgynous,[1] while a dual form of Śiva and his consort called Ardhanārīśvara[2] belongs to the same circle of ideas. Such sexual dualisms, however, and the view of things which suggests them, do not appear to have been prominent in the more aristocratic Aryan tradition. No more than the Olympian deities of Greece do the Vedic sky gods seem to suggest

[1] Barth, *R. I.*, p. 200.
[2] D. C. Sen, p. 231. Cf. Barth, *R. I.*, p. 200, note.

to their worshippers the grosser aspects of these relationships. As in the case of Greece, so also here, we must suppose the invasion of that lordlier culture by aboriginal races 'with their polygamy and polyandry, their agricultural rites, their sex emblems and fertility goddesses'.[1] When we turn from the Vedic gods to such a deity as the wife of Śiva, presenting herself in many forms and under many names, it scarcely needs the testimony of the *Harivaṃśa* to assure us that she was really a deity worshipped by the savage tribes of 'Śabaras, Barbaras, and Pulindas'.[2] To such peoples the simplicities of life, birth especially and death, bulk larger and press more urgently upon them than more complex problems, and the god who is greatest in their eyes is he or she who represents and controls these very real facts. Such a deity or such a group of deities is represented under the various aspects and titles which have been combined in India into one goddess who is *par excellence* Mahādevī, the great goddess. Reflection when it first arises and expresses itself under the forms of the imagination is able to adopt such a deity and make use in that context of the mythological conception that the original creative principle is female. At the same time the fact that the earth is not only the 'common mother',

Whose womb immeasurable and infinite breast
Teems and feeds all,

but also the receiver of the bodies of the dead, made possible the union in her person of many aspects both of graciousness and of terror. There can be little doubt that Devī or Durgā is a combination of many deities, as her husband probably is also. The many non-Sanskrit names which she bears—such as, for example, Vaśuli and Ṭhakurāṇī—indicate some of the 'earth mothers' whose worship she has absorbed. She represents undoubtedly a syncretistic combination of various aspects of the secret of life and of reproduction. The worship of the male and female powers in a joint sovereignty usually

[1] Murray's *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 78.
[2] *E.R.E.*, V, p. 118, article *Durgā*.

gives place presently to a recognition of the female principle as the more ultimate. Just as this deity is the 'mother', Ambikā, so she is Kumārī, the maiden. She corresponds both to the Greek earth-goddess, who is 'Kourotrophos', 'rearer of the young', and to Koré, the earth maiden, represented crudely in one image as covered with innumerable breasts.[1] At the same time she is Pārvatī, the mountain goddess, she 'who delights in spirituous liquor, flesh, and sacrificial victims',[2] dwelling in sepulchres,[3] true spouse of Śiva.

The place that the worship of this goddess has in ordinary polytheistic Hinduism does not concern us here. What interests us is to see how this deep-seated and primitive faith in the mother-principle, as the ultimate secret of the universe, again and again asserts itself in alien surroundings with a strength that raises this female deity to a place approaching that of sole god. Buddhism would seem to be little likely to harbour such a worship; and yet, just as these goddesses made their way among the higher deities of the Aryan pantheon, so they found a place also within this atheistic system. It is indeed maintained by some that it was by the way of Buddhism that the Tāntric doctrine in its later form, as Śakti-worship, was able to climb upwards from its lowly origin and obtain recognition within the pale of Brāhmanism.[4] It need not surprise us that this type of worship should have been able to assert itself among the Tibetan and Nepalese Buddhists. The austere Hīnayāna system had already given place in these regions to a theistic Mahāyāna which was more able to satisfy religious longings. There was not at the same time in that form of the religion strength to resist the invasion of instincts scarcely less deep but far less worthy. From being a worship followed by aborigines and outcastes Tantrism passed by the help of Buddhist prestige to take its place, in the twelfth or thirteenth century, among the higher classes. We are told that

[1] Murray's *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 78.
[2] *Mbh.* IV. 6. [3] *Mbh.* VI. 23.
[4] Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Śastri in *Modern Buddhism*, p. 27.

'even now the Tāntric deities prefer to be worshipped by the lower classes (rather) than by Brāhmans. In many localities Durgā is worshipped first by the untouchable classes and then by Brāhmans. Brāhmans have to wait in some villages till the *pūjā* has commenced at some Hadi's house in the neighbourhood. The *Jayadratha Yāmāla* says the Devī likes to be worshipped by oil-pressers'.[1] So also in the worship of Śitalā Devī and in the Dharma-worship—both of them cults that, as they are found in Bengal, include many Buddhist and Tāntric elements—the priests are called 'Dom Pandits', an evident indication of their outcaste origin.[2]

Whether or not it was the patronage of Buddhism that secured for a worship of origin so humble admission within higher circles, it is at all events the case that Tantrism with its regiment of female deities was early a luxuriant growth among the Mahāyāna Buddhists of Nepal and Tibet and the adjoining provinces of India. It is believed that in Udyāna (the modern Suwāt) it had its birth, but it may well have sprung up in more than one environment. We see it already full blown in what is called Vajrayāna, a form of Mahāyāna doctrine which 'conceives the existence of Nirātmā Devī at the top of the formless (*arūpa*) heaven', in whose embrace 'the mind bent on *bodhi*' 'enjoys something like the pleasures of the senses'.[3] This word, *Vajra*, thunderbolt or diamond, which at the same time signifies the *phallus*, 'sums up in itself all the cosmic mysteries and ritual observances of Buddhist Śivaism'.[4] 'Vajrasattva . . . is the supreme Buddha, who manifests the primordial reality, at once creative and immanent.'[5]

It is evident that Buddhism had developed many aspects that invited the appearance within it of this morbid growth. Dharma was sometimes worshipped as a female divinity. She was Ādimātā and Buddhamātā, the mother of all the Tathāgatas. Again we find Tāntric Buddhism pursuing the

[1] *Modern Buddhism*, p. 12. [2] D. C. Sen, p. 31.
[3] Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Śastri in *Modern Buddhism*, p. 6.
[4] Poussin, *Opinions*, p. 379. [5] Ibid., p. 379.

Pravṛitti mārga and aiming at 'the realization of the unity of the Ādi-Buddha and the Ādi-Prajñā (*Puruṣa* and *Prakṛiti*) through the love and enjoyment of the world'.[1] Just as the wife of Śiva bears among her thousand names that of Mātaṅgī, of Caṇḍālikā, and others equally suggestive of the impure and despised castes, so within the Tāntric Buddhism of Nepal we find female deities bearing these and similar names, virgins (*kumārī*), mothers and 'terrible sisters'.[2] These are the Tārās, wives of the Bodhisattvas, who correspond to the Śakti of Hinduism, just as alongside of them Avalokita and Vajrapāṇi assume titles of Śiva, the Lokeśvara or the 'black-throated one'.

That is evidence sufficient of the manner in which Buddhism from the tenth century onwards was permeated with Tāntric ideas, so that Acyutānanda in the sixteenth century could say, 'I tell you, take refuge in Buddha, in mother Ādi Śakti or the primordial energy (i.e. Dharma)'.[3] It is not difficult to understand how into the central shrine of Buddhism, left 'empty, swept and garnished', there should enter and possess it this power, crude and gross enough, but at the same time very real and potent. It was the same with Śivaism. The great God Himself had come to represent the Unknown, the Impersonal, the Inert. He had come to be recognized as the deity of philosophy, the *nirguṇa*, the unknowable. This goddess—Kālī, Caṇḍī, or Śakti, or whatever her name might be—is the creator of the world seen and near, a personal divinity upon whom faith can rest. Similarly Caṇḍī is Mahāmāyā of the Vedānta, a merciful goddess, who can 'assuage the pain of troubled hearts', more real and dear than the remote Unmanifested. It is the same story as we found writ so large upon the history of the Vaiṣṇavite cults: 'The worship of the Unmanifested laid no hold on my heart.' It may seem strange that this deity should lay any other grasp than that of horror and repulsion upon any heart. Who

[1] *Modern Buddhism*, p. 8. [2] Poussin, *Opinions*, p. 386.
[3] *Sunya Samhita*, *Modern Buddhism*, p. 127.

would expect that when men turned away from Śiva, 'lying', as the Purāṇas represent him, 'like a corpse', it would be to turn from him to the figure of Śakti or Kālī, represented in the same connexion as dancing upon that corpse 'in destructive ecstacy'? But we have by this time ceased to marvel at any transformation that the desiring heart can accomplish. It is well to remember, too, that there was a domestic and genial side to the character of Śiva and his consort, Umā, and upon that the popular heart in Bengal at least laid hold. Perhaps that helps to explain the claim that one reason for the spread of Śakti worship was 'its great tenderness', which made it 'religiously extremely attractive'.[1]

Under such influences as these—with Buddhism on the one hand bequeathing to it its waning prestige, and on the other strengthened in its appeal by the natural reaction from the *Śunya Vāda*, the 'way of nothingness'—Śakti-worship spread steadily in Eastern India. It was undoubtedly also helped at the same time by the fact that, as its whole history and the names of the goddess it adores suggest, it answers to many fears and passions that are deep in the human soul and seem to be part of the secret of the universe. In the union within it of the forces of lust and death seemed to lie the key to the 'inmost, ancient mysteries'. These mystic suggestions, in combination with the gross and savage instincts which this worship pretended to sanctify, gave the Śakti sect its widespread and sinister influence. Human sacrifices have generally been recognized as peculiarly acceptable in the worship of this goddess, and in the *Mālatī Mādhava* of Bhavabhūti such a sacrifice of a chaste virgin to Cāmuṇḍā is described. But it is another kind of sacrifice that is more often demanded in this worship in which lust lies so hard by hate. In the *Sahajiyā* cult, which owed its origin to the Vāmācārī Buddhists,[2] and is celebrated by the Bengali poets, Kāṇu Bhaṭṭa in the tenth century, and Caṇḍīdās in the fourteenth, we have this aspect of Tantrism frankly presented. 'The

[1] D. C. Sen, p. 251. [2] Ibid., p. 38.

woman', says Caṇḍīdās, 'will sacrifice herself entirely to love.... She must plunge herself headlong in the sea of abuse, but at the same time scrupulously avoid touching the forbidden stream.'[1] 'Hear me, friends,' he says again, 'how salvation may be attained through love for a woman. . . . He that pervades the universe, unseen by all, is approachable only by him who knows the secret of pure love.'[2] The prescription for this way of salvation is thus described in one of the Tantras: 'A dancing girl, a girl of the Kapāli caste, a prostitute, a washerwoman, a barber's daughter, a Brāhman girl, a Śūdra girl, a milkmaid, a girl of the Mālākar caste—these nine are recognized as the legitimate subjects for Tāntric practices. Those that are most clever among these should be held as pre-eminently fit; maidens endowed with beauty, good luck, youth, and amiable disposition are to be worshipped with care, and a man's salvation is attained thereby.'[3]

'Tantrism rests on the principle that of all the illusions—and everything is illusion—the illusion called woman is the most sublime, the most necessary to salvation.' 'No infamy, not excluding incest, is omitted from the worship of woman (*strī pūjā*), the supreme divinity.' As the dyer effaces stains on a garment by means of his dye, so the thought can be purified by impurity and desire can cast desire out.[4]

This Tāntric religion—as its own books declare, and as its character certainly indicates—is a religion for the *Kali Yuga*. Its theory is that man is accepted as a creature of passions, and that by the very means of these he is to 'cross the region of darkness'. Those things that have most of all caused man's ruin—the five *Makāras*, as they are called—*madya*, wine; *maṃsa*, flesh; *matsya*, fish; *mudrā*, mystic gesticulations;[5] and *maithuna*, sexual indulgence—are to be made the very

[1] D. C. Sen, p. 40. [2] Ibid., p. 44.
[3] Ibid, p. 42, quoted from the *Gupta Sudana Tantra*.
[4] Poussin's *Opinions*, pp. 403, 405, 406.
[5] *Mudrā* is also explained as parched grain, and as the young woman associated with the ritual and previously initiated and consecrated. (Poussin's *Opinions*, p. 403, note.)

means of his salvation. 'Śiva desires to employ those very poisons in order to eradicate the poison in the human system. Poison is the antidote of poison. . . . The physician, however, must be an experienced one. If there be a mistake as to the application, the patient is like to die. Śiva has said that the way of *kulācāra*, is as difficult as it is to walk on the edge of a sword or to hold a wild tiger.'[1] Limitations have to be prescribed in this dangerous remedy 'when the *Kali Yuga* is in full strength'. The 'three sweets' should be used instead of wine, and the *maithuna* should be with *svīyā śakti*. 'He who worships the great Ādyā Kālī with the five *makāras*, and repeats her four hundred names, becomes suffused with the presence of the *Devī*, and for him there remains nothing in the three worlds that is beyond his powers.'[2]

These last words suggest how close is the relation of this strange cultus to the Yoga with its desire for magic powers. It has been said of the Yoga that 'two currents of thought meet in it. One is Sāṅkhyan rationalism; the other is barbarous superstition'. That description applies equally to the *Śākta* system. Its metaphysics is the metaphysics of the *Sāṅkhya*, but it is the *Sāṅkhya* linked to a mythology that has its roots in the darkest fears and the grossest passions of the human soul. The combination seems a strange one, but the fact that the thought of the *Sāṅkhya* is still to a considerable extent primitive thought, and that its forms are as yet largely governed by imagination, makes such a combination possible. It has been maintained that all the goddesses of mythology were abstract nouns. That is certainly far from being the case, but perhaps it may be accepted as true that female deities are more capable than others of being identified with ideas, when early speculation is struggling to find some medium of expression. And, further, the *Sāṅkhya* has no ethical content such as would make it incongruous

[1] The commentator Jaganmohana Tarkalamkara, quoted by Avalon, p. cxvi.

[2] *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, VIII (Avalon).

with the grossest conceptions of popular superstition. On the contrary, there is much in its purely unmoral and intellectual categories that leaves room within it for magic and sorcery and a belief in demonic powers. It is easy to see that the *Prakṛiti* and the *Puruṣa* of the *Sāṅkhya* and its doctrine of the creation of the world by the exercise upon slumbering *Prakṛiti* of a 'magnetic influence' are capable enough of being directly identified with such deities and such conceptions as those of the Śakti cult. 'This universe,' says Śiva, in the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, addressing Devī, 'from the great principle of *mahat* (*mahat-tatva*, intelligence) down to the gross elements, has been created by thee, since *Brahman*, cause of all causes, is but the instrumental cause. . . . Thou, the supreme Yoginī, dost, moved by his mere desire, create, protect and destroy this world.'[1] What is called 'Great Brahma' in the *Bhagavadgītā*,[2] *mūla-prakṛiti*, the womb into which the seed is cast from which the universe is born, is Śakti. From the dual principles of Śiva and Śakti is evolved the universe, which is ruled by Maheśvara and Maheśvarī.[3] But, as a matter of fact, this is not a reign of equals, for at the dissolution of the universe, while Śiva, as Kāla, devours all, his consort devours Mahākāla himself, and is, therefore, 'the supreme, primordial Kālikā'.[4] 'Because thou devourest Kāla, thou art Kālī, the original form of all things, and because thou art the origin of, and devourest, all things, thou art called the Ādyā Kālī. Resuming after dissolution thine own form, dark and formless, thou alone remainest as one, ineffable and inconceivable.'[5] Again, Śiva says, 'Listen to the reasons why thou (Śrī Devī) shouldst be worshipped, and how thereby the individual becomes united with the *Brahman*. Thou art the only *Parā Prakṛiti* of the Supreme Soul, *Brahman*, and

[1] *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, IV (Avalon, p. 49), 'Under the influence of the gaze of *Puruṣa Prakṛiti* commences the world-dance', Avalon, loc. cit., foot-note.

[2] XIV. 3.

[3] Avalon, p. xxvi.

[4] *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, IV (Avalon, p. 49).

[5] Op. cit., IV (Avalon, p. 50).

from thee has sprung the whole universe, O Śivā, its mother. . . . Thou art the birthplace of even us (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva); thou knowest the whole world, yet none know thee.'

The process of manifestation is one in which throughout, in agreement with the whole bias of Śakti conceptions, sexual ideas predominate. 'The dual principles of Śiva and Śakti . . . pervade the whole universe, and are present in man in the *Svayambhū-liṅga* of the *mūlādhāra* and the Devī Kuṇḍalinī, who, in the serpent form, encircles it.'[1] There are *Bindu*, *Bīja*, and *Nāda* at various stages in the evolution, these being explained as Śiva, Śakti, and their relation to each other. Each manifestation has its Śakti, 'without which it avails nothing'.[2] Throughout its symbolism and pseudo-philosophizings there lies at the basis of the whole system, if it can be called a system, the conception of the sexual relationship as the ultimate explanation of the universe. There are male and female forms of all the manifestations of the *Para-brahman*, but the female aspect is the more fundamental, and 'there is no neuter form of God'.[3]

[1] Avalon, p. xxvi.

[2] Ibid., p. xxiv, 'not Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra create, maintain, or destroy; but Brahmī, Vaiṣṇavī, Rudrāṇī. Their husbands are but as dead bodies.' *Kubjikā Tantra*, chap. i, quoted in Avalon, note to p. xxiv.

[3] *Śāktānanda-taraṅginī*, chap. iii (Avalon, p. xxviii).

PART II

THE THEOLOGY

A REVIEW of the whole course of the theistic development in India, as we have sought to trace it, leaves us baffled and perplexed by its waywardness. We have spoken of it as a development for lack of a better word, but if by that is meant the ordered unfolding of an idea through successive stages of advance towards its complete disclosure, then we have found nothing here that can be so described. There is continuity throughout, no doubt, but it is the loosely articulated continuity furnished by the history of varied peoples, commingling, interacting, but never fused by any single powerful influence into one vital and coherent whole. We have not a near enough view of them, nor material sufficiently complete from their history and their literature to enable us to follow all the winding course of their spiritual development, and to understand why it took now this direction and now that. It is only at a late period that the religion of devotion becomes fully articulate as a theology, and the process by which it reached that systematic form is so obscure that one may sometimes doubt whether it was a continuous process at all. Its continuity in the earlier period seems little more than the continuity of a series of devout spirits who sought God in the way that their hearts dictated. There is room enough in such circumstances for waywardness and diversity. The development, however, becomes more stable when the religion has thought itself out in a theology, and has thus become conscious of its bases and its aims. While it is, therefore, of value and interest to examine, as far as may be, the theological conceptions that are implicit in the whole of the Indian

theistic evolution, it is the theological philosophy of the Upaniṣad period, and to a still greater extent the later and more deliberate theologisings of Rāmānuja and the other schoolmen that disclose the principles that have throughout consciously or unconsciously controlled the process. What was latent always in the intuitions of the *bhakta* comes to full self-consciousness in the systems of the theologians and philosophers. We shall, accordingly, dwell mainly upon the ages of reflection and their products in theistic philosophy and theology.

The earliest age is mainly of interest as showing us what, we imagine, might have been. The Vedic period is Aryan, but it is scarcely Indian. Whilst we find in it the roots of much that grows to maturity through the centuries that follow, it lacks at the same time certain elements which we may describe as distinctively Hindu, and which give the whole succeeding development its colour and direction. The Theism, therefore, of the *Ṛig Veda* is not properly Indian Theism. There are elements in it which may possibly be Semitic. There are other elements which betray their kinship with the Aryan mind of Western peoples. But what we may call the Hindu note sounds but seldom in those early Hymns. We seem, it is true, to see those early worshippers more clearly and to understand them better than many who at later periods appear upon the scene of history. The Aryan invaders descending upon India through the north-western passes, and taking possession of the new land, a virile people, looking up to the sky above them and calling upon the gods by many names—they are not unlike others who have gone forth with their flocks and herds, conquering and to conquer. But there is not much at first at least that is specifically Indian in this old Vedic faith, and there is no apparent reason why the worship of those gods of the upper air should not presently pass with the growth of moral enlightenment and of the sense of reason and of order into an ethical monotheism. Why it was not so we simply cannot tell. We may say that there is

in the Indian blood a deep and ineradicable instinct for Pantheism. But to say so is only to describe the problem in other words—not to solve it. There are psychical secrets that we must be content to leave as secrets. Why the principle of the *ṛita*, of the moral order in the universe, failed of fruitfulness and withered; why Varuṇa, for a while so awful in his moral majesty, fell to the rank of the Tritons and the nymphs, we cannot tell. We can only dimly perceive that as a matter of fact the Indian turned to follow other and more phantasmal forms than love and righteousness, that instead of seeking an ideal of unity such as might have been suggested to him by the analogy of a well-knit community and a harmonious state, he began his long and barren quest for a unity vaguer, less substantial, that might satisfy his intellect if it ignored the longings of his heart.

The most we can say is that the normal process by which, among other Aryan peoples, 'the heavenly ones' developed into distinct and many-sided personalities, was thwarted by influences that seem to have been present in the Indian climate and to have sprung from the Indian soil. Just as a meteorite, as soon as it passes within the atmosphere of the earth melts into fire and gas, so the moral personalities that had been forming about the Aryan sky-gods with their promise and potency of Theism, seem with the descent of their worshippers into the plains of India to suffer a not dissimilar transformation. In the ordinary course of development we should have expected the order of nature, if that is what *ṛita* first signified, as well as its guardian, Varuṇa, to have taken more and more to itself an ethical connotation—as indeed we see it doing for a while—until this great god became the Jehovah of a spiritual religion. We should have expected, as the invaders found a settled home and established a stable government, that that god and the other higher gods would have taken over the control and guidance of the state from the old family and tribal guardians, the spirits of the ancestors and the gods of the underworld. But neither the climate

nor the configuration of the widespread plains of India lent themselves to this development.

> Winds blow and waters roll
> Strength to the brave and power and deity.

But not when the winds are the stagnant airs of a tropical land, or when the waters exhale the poison of malaria. Disorder and death reigned without, and the only refuge seemed to be within. There was not the well compacted structure of the state, with all its lessons, its

> piety and fear, . . .
> Domestic awe, night-rest and neighbourhood,

leading men's hearts by a natural ascent from earth to heaven. There was instead anarchy and disease, making the world hateful and God shadowy and dim. Hence, perhaps, the desire to escape that so dominates Indian religious thought, and to escape to a region of ideas as different as could be conceived from that which they knew and loathed. The failure of the conquering Aryans to establish fixed order and government in their new possessions; their inability, whether through racial pride or lack of spiritual vigour, thoroughly to assimilate and transmute the religious elements contributed by the peoples among whom they dwelt; perhaps, also, the depressing and enervating influence of a tropical and too fertile land—these things may go some way to explain the Pantheism and pessimism, the moral weakness and intellectual subtlety, that distinguish so much of the Indian spirit—the courage, begotten of dislike and despair, with which it renounces the world, and, at the same time, the cowardice with which it often turns its back on God.

Those questions which are specially characteristic of the Indian religious development only begin to appear with the close of the Vedic period. As these discover themselves in connexion with our inquiry they show us a conflict continually in process between what we may call the natural human instinct for Theism and certain tendencies which we cannot account for more particularly than by describing them as peculiar to

the Indian mind. The sincere devotion of the Theistic worshipper, when it emerges from its obscurity, is seen to be threatened, not only by formalism and by the power of the priest—a universal danger—but also by Pantheism and a morbid intellectualism. Perhaps we may not be far wrong in suggesting that it is to the influence of that devout spirit that the fact is due that the revolt from the sacerdotalism of the Brāhmaṇas results not in a rationalism that ignores or denies God, but in a mysticism that seeks to reach him, remote as he appears to it to be, by an insight which, if too intellectual, is at least inward, and to that extent spiritual. In Greece, perhaps because the devout spirit was feebler and more rare, religion and philosophy early fell apart, and were often in open antagonism to each other. In India, on the other hand, even such an atheistic system as the Sāṅkhya presently felt it necessary to attach to itself a God. The Hindu speculative systems have been compared to the scholastic philosophies of the Middle Ages because they were almost always philosophies within a theology. Those that the Upaniṣads present to us are not properly described as rationalistic, but as mystical speculations. It is not the discursive reason that governs them but intuitive insight. They seek God, not at the end of a syllogism, but at the conclusion of a process, which can only, however, be described as negatively ethical. When the too opaque moral integuments are stripped off, God is intellectually apprehended or surmised by the Upaniṣad seekers—a Being so rarefied and so transparent that he must, as they conceive, be the final and absolute One.

It is characteristic of mysticism, and it is characteristic of Upaniṣad speculation that its whole vision is set towards God, and yet it always fails to see him—its long pilgrimage is to his feet, and yet it cannot overtake him. With every advance towards him it removes him further off; even while it strains its eyes most tensely it refines his form into something harder to perceive. The 'guesses at truth', as Max Müller called them, that the Upaniṣads present to us seem un-

questionably to have their root in real religious instincts, and therefore in the feeling life, but feeling appeared to those seers to have too much of the element of plurality in it, and therefore in the quest for unity it must be eliminated, and to have too much of the world about it, and therefore in the quest for God it must be reckoned as of inferior worth. Nevertheless, there probably was a real continuity between the fervent devotion that bowed before Vāsudeva and other gods of the simple worshipper and the super-refined mysticism of these seers. No one doubts that Jacob Boehme's religion was rooted deep in love and devotion to a personal God, and yet considerable portions of such a dialogue as that upon the *Super-sensual Life* in his *Way to Christ* might almost have been transcribed from the Upaniṣads. 'When thou canst throw thyself into That where no creature dwelleth', says the Master to his disciple, 'then thou hearest what God speaketh . . . When thy soul is winged up and above that which is temporal, the outward senses and the imagination being locked up by holy abstraction, then the eternal hearing, seeing, and speaking are revealed in thee.' To mystics everywhere it seems to be only, as Boehme says, 'by stopping the wheel of the imagination and the senses' that He who is above and beyond imagination and senses and all that is created can be known. An intellectual unity seems to be the most all-inclusive that man can imagine, and an intellectually-conceived Being to be the one least partaking of the temporal, and so nearest to the nature of that which is above time and thought and being itself.

Perhaps it is these characteristics that are most distinctive of the Theism of the Upaniṣads. It is intellectual and aristocratic, while the popular devotion on the other hand was emotional and democratic. In spite of this difference, however, they are both Theisms. They are scarcely farther apart indeed than were Eckhart and Tauler within the Christian Church in the Middle Ages, and in both cases the diverse types are united not only by their theistic belief but by the

mystical texture of their minds. It has been said that Eckhart dwelt specially on the being of God, and Tauler and the 'Friends of God', on the other hand, on the will of God, and a somewhat parallel distinction might be made between the Upaniṣad teachers and the saints of the *bhakti* schools. A comparison of the two is apt to cast upon the more speculative doctrine an appearance of Pantheism, just as Eckhart seems often to be open to a similar charge. But however closely it may verge at times upon Pantheism, the name of Mysticism more truly describes it as presenting 'that attitude of mind in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God'.[1] To the more speculative mind that relation is one of contemplation of the being of God; to simple souls it appeals as a relation of loving communion. There is a wide difference between these two types, but at the same time a fundamental agreement. The aim in each case is to obtain immediate unity with God, though the means used may differ. In the Upaniṣads what engrosses the seeker is the way by which men stripping off veil after veil may attain to the contemplation of 'the subtle essence', 'the True', 'the Self'.[2] The high intellectual road that leads to this goal can be traversed only by the few, only by those with leisure for thought and capacity for thought. What they are seeking is not the satisfaction of a practical need but, we may almost say, the gratification of an intellectual curiosity. At the same time, as those writers constantly claim, the seeker becomes what he contemplates. A student of Mysticism in other fields has pointed out that, as the mystic follows the method of contemplation, he 'has more and more the impression of being that which he knows and of knowing that which he is'.[3] The desire of this type of mysticism is to discover 'the mystery of the Impenetrable Source', rather than to obtain

[1] E. Caird's *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, II, p. 210.
[2] *Chāndog. Up.* VI. 13.
[3] Delacroix, *Études sur le Mysticisme*, p. 370, quoted in Underhill's *Mysticism*, p. 395.

a personal deliverance, and in discovering it they possess it, even if it is only a fleeting possession.

A question which naturally arises when one seeks to extract a theology from the speculations of the Upaniṣads is whether God is viewed by them as immanent or as transcendent—whether he is linked to a remote and alien world by such a method of self-communication as that of emanations or whether God dwells in the world, and man has but to learn to see him. It is a further evidence of the mystical character of these writings that they give to this question an ambiguous answer. How God has related himself to the world seems to concern them less than how man may discover God. The thought of grace as an attribute of the ultimate Self does not occupy their attention to any great extent, for they are not thinking so much of how that Self descends among men, but of how man's mind may climb thither. Nor is that climbing a process of moral so much as of mental toil. We find in them what Plotinus describes as 'the flight of the lonely soul to the lonely One'. It was Gnosticism, or perhaps Christianity, that provoked Plotinus to attempt the complementary demonstration of the way in which the Absolute One is manifested in lower forms of being and comes into the life of man. The unmethodical thinkers of the Upaniṣads do not appear to have felt the urgency of explaining this problem. The doctrine of *māyā* was made full use of by Śaṅkarācārya to resolve this difficulty when it presented itself to him, and the later theistic theologians called in the aid of the theory of emanations for the same purpose, but as yet the demand for an explanation of plurality and evil does not seem to have awakened in those Upaniṣad thinkers. The experience of inward need and of helplessness, on the other hand, drove the popular Theisms to seek in their theory of incarnations and in their doctrine of grace an explanation of how and why a God who in the nature of things would appear to have no relation with a world of evil and ignorance may yet draw near to it and deliver it. The doctrines of divine grace and of the

divine self-manifestation are the discovery of the heart rather than of the intellect; they are the products of a sense of moral need—or rather, perhaps, we may more truly say, revelations granted to it—rather than the postulates of pure reason. The engagement of the reason with these questions, its explanation of the divine entanglement with the human and the imperfect, comes later. The demands of the reason do not make themselves heard so early, nor are they so urgent, as those of the heart.

In these earlier speculations we obtain no more than hints of the existence of this problem of the relation of God and the world. There is, for example, the characteristically imaginative presentation of the downward growth of the universe from its root in the True—

> With its roots on high, its shoots downwards,
> Stands that eternal fig-tree.[1]

The doctrine of emanation that seems to be suggested here, as well as in the similar passage in the *Śvetāśvatara*, which speaks of the One as sending down the branches of its plurality from above,[2] views the Absolute One as transcendent over the universe and withdrawn from it. On the other hand many passages in the Upaniṣads speak of *Brahman* in the language of immanence as dwelling within the universe 'up to the finger tips'. To find these two contradictory views side by side in these documents is in itself an indication of the mystical character of their thinking. To the mystics at all times the supreme Reality has presented itself now in one aspect and now in the other. They are seldom sufficiently systematic in their thought to realize the contradiction; and some of the greatest of them have been content to alternate between the two views in the language they employ.[3] This is so because God is one apart from whose life nothing at all exists, while at the same time the rarefied unity of his being removes him to a sphere of transcendent separation from all that is other than

[1] *Kaṭha Up.* 6. 1.
[2] *Śvet. Up.* 3. 9.
[3] Underhill's *Mysticism*, p. 121.

himself. Therefore he is at once the remote One, and he who is of all others the most nigh. 'Though never stirring it is swifter than thought. . . . Though standing still it overtakes the others who are running . . . It stirs and stirs not; it is far and likewise near. It is inside of all this, and it is outside of all this'.[1] Such teaching may be reconcilable with Theism, and indeed may have in it the very stuff of a religion which may well be both passionate and personal, but it does not obey the laws of the understanding, nor does it satisfy the systematic theologian. We can see how when Śaṅkarācārya came to the Upaniṣads, that he might formulate from them a theory of the universe, it was only by the help of such a *tour de force* as the *māyā* doctrine provides that he could ever solve their logical antinomies and build them up into a consistent system.

The popular Theisms are too exclusively emotional, the aristocratic Mysticisms are too exclusively intellectual. The two seem never to be quite successfully combined throughout the Indian religious development. For their combination into a powerful and enduring Theism perhaps there was necessary a great religious personality to knit them together by his life and by his teaching. So much in the spiritual history of India is anonymous and impersonal. Buddha, for whatever reason, rejected the task, and yet, strangely enough, he went farther than any one to accomplish it. He rejected God, and yet his doctrine develops by the very influence of his personality into the nearest in certain aspects that India has produced to an ethical Theism. But Indian religion is everywhere feeble in its emphasis upon the personal, and therefore upon what is most ethical and most vital. It finds the ground of the universe in an ultimate Intelligence rather than in a supreme Will. Even when, with later Vaiṣṇavism, God is a God of grace, who condescends to men and incarnates himself for their salvation, the doctrine seems to hesitate between the conception of a gracious Will that of his own good

[1] *Īśa Up.* 4–5.

pleasure thus comes near in love, and a distant Mind—Aristotle's 'unmoved Mover'—whose emanations and manifestations are darkenings of his pure nature, accommodations to this lower region of his transcendent Being, necessary if man is ever to come to knowledge of a God so far removed. 'When God seeth his servants in sorrow', says the *Bhagavadbhakta*, 'he tarrieth not, but himself cometh as an incarnate deity to save them.'[1] But the *Vyūhas*, and perhaps also the *Vibhavas*, of Rāmānuja are more the postulates of metaphysics than of ethics.

The place that the doctrine of *avatāras* holds in Indian religion suggests a consideration which deeply affects the character of its theology. No doubt every religion, however high its spiritual rank, has in it elements of nature worship. But in the case of Hinduism these elements do not merely cling to its skirts; they are of its very flesh and bones. It grows out of them, and is still carefully governed by them. The religion is like the form of some of its own gods, half human, half bestial. It has not had time yet, or the human, ethical elements in the Indian spirit have not proved powerful enough, to transform it fully. We see this clearly in the case of the *avatāras* of the Indian theistic sects. These have, no doubt, their root in the worship of theriomorphic deities. The first suggestion of what bears the appearance of incarnation is such a statement as we find in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that 'having assumed the form of a tortoise Prajāpati created offspring', or again that in the form of a boar he raised the earth from the bottom of the ocean.[2] If we mean by incarnation the assumption by God for a moral end of some lowly guise that brings him near to men to help them—and that is what is meant in the case of a truly ethical Theism—then these are not incarnations. Their natural origin is scarcely concealed. Just as the elephant-god becomes semi-humanized into the god Ganeśa with the head of an elephant and the

[1] The *Bhaktakalpadruma*, quoted by Dr. Grierson in *J. R. A. S.*
[2] *E. R. E.* II. 811[2].

body of a man, so here we see the tortoise and the boar, ancient objects of worship, undergoing transition by another method to a higher and more respectable rank of deities. It was a natural step to suggest next that the lower forms were assumed by the god in gracious condescension to human need. Thus all the animal *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, the fish, the man-lion, represent old theriomorphic deities that bear upon them all the marks of their origin among wild nature cults. It need not surprise us therefore to find that Kṛiṣṇa in the *Gītā* is said 'to come to bodied birth' for purposes that are not upon the highest ethical level when we remember this pit from which the incarnation doctrine has been digged. Not in this respect alone, the Indian Theisms bear evident marks upon them of a grossly natural origin that they have been able as yet only very imperfectly to slough. Students of the religion of the ancient Jews find the explanation of the process by which it was gradually purified from the impurities of Semitic nature-worship in the fact of a divine revelation to that people. Nothing less could have brought that result about. It is not surprising that this end was never accomplished in the case of a god like Kṛiṣṇa, still so intimately associated with sensual enjoyment, or warlike prowess, or in the case of a god like Śiva, worshipped even by the devout poet-sages of the South as 'the maniac' and 'the blue-throated one'. Many of the *avatārs* are reminders of the early career of gods to whom a gross past still clings too close.

It is of course, however, in the *Bhagavadgītā* with its fully formulated *avatāra* doctrine that the most resolute attempt is made to persuade the two streams of tendency, the intellectual and the emotional, to flow together in a single channel. Its success in legitimizing the popular Vaiṣṇavite doctrine by linking it up with the Theosophy of the thinkers gives it, apart from other considerations, a place of special importance in the theology of Indian Theism. It is true that it is not a systematic treatise, any more than are the Epistles of St. Paul, but like them it is a canonical scripture out of which later

systems were constructed. It has a closer relation to the unmethodical speculations of the Upaniṣads that lie behind it than to the elaborated systems of later scholasticism. The inconsistencies of its teaching are obvious, but the direction in which a solution for them may be sought is indicated, and there loom before us the outlines of a Theism that is characteristically Indian in its presuppositions and that has purged itself sufficiently of superstition to be acceptable to thoughtful men.

The setting in which we have this poem in the *Mahābhārata* suggests that it is primarily an ethical rather than a theological treatise. Just as the Upaniṣads in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* are an attempt to explain the significance of a sacrificial ceremony, and as the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* is occupied with the problem of the life after death, so the *Gītā* has its origin, according to the *Mahābhārata* story, in a moral problem that perplexed Arjuna. Accordingly, if we are to interpret it from that point of view, we shall seek the central element of its teaching in its doctrine of the *Karma Yoga* or Rule of Works. This represents an immense ethical advance upon the formalism of the ritual scriptures, while at the same time it escapes the tendency apparent in the Upaniṣads towards an intellectualism which forsook the performance of practical duties for the more exalted way of meditation upon abstract truth. We can scarcely be mistaken in explaining the poem as a product of the reflection of such a thinker as those whose meditations are included in the Upaniṣads, seeking to interpret in the terms of his thought the motives that he saw at work among the adherents of the *bhakti* cults. To do a thing for love, like even the simplest devotee was, he saw, a far higher thing than to do it for reward and a far more possible thing for most than to follow the lonely path of knowledge.[1] 'Do thine appointed work,' he enjoins, 'for work is more excellent than worklessness. . . . This world is fettered by work, save in the work that is for the sake of the sacrifice. For the sake

[1] VII. 19.

of it do thou perform work, O son of Kuntī, freed from all attachment.'[1] This doctrine of a service that does not enchain the doer but leaves him free and points him forward to final emancipation[2] betrays by its emphasis upon the motive in the heart and by the parallel interpretation it places upon the sacrifice (for 'Viṣṇu is the sacrifice')[3] its indebtedness to the school of loving faith. But here as elsewhere the poet speaks with a double tongue. Sometimes he is drawn away to a view of work so pallid and anaemic that it can be described as the 'consummation of worklessness'.[4] At another time his emphasis upon devotion still retains the glow of affection of the simple-hearted. 'Whatever be thy work, thine eating, thy sacrifice, thy gift, thy mortification, make all of them an offering to me. Thus shalt thou be released from the bond of works . . . and shalt come to me. . . . Even though he should be a doer of exceeding evil that worships me with undivided devotion, he shall be deemed good; for he is of right purpose.'[5] There is no disability of class or sex among those who travel by this road.[6] Yet at the same time while such a one is 'dear to the Lord'[7] that Lord is 'indifferent to all born beings',[8] and yet again he is 'the friend of all born beings'.[9] Thus this irenicon labours after the reconciliation of irreconcilable moods of the spirit, giving with one hand and withdrawing again with the other, now proclaiming its author an adherent of an ethical Theism, and again, in the interest of an abstract intellectualism,

[1] III. 8, 9. [2] V. 2.

[3] *Taitt. Saṃ.* I. 7, 4. What such a sentence as this means it is by no means easy to be certain. It at least indicates a close connexion between this god and the Work, *par excellence*, which does not fetter but set free. There is another saying which may also have significance in the emergence of this doctrine of work that does not bring with it the curse of 'world-wandering'. In the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* it is said, 'The *ṛita*, the truth is the sacrifice' (I. 10, 11). Reflection on the meaning of the sacrifice may have pointed the way to the self-sacrificing, or at least unselfish, service which the *Gītā* enjoins.

[4] XVIII. 49. [5] IX. 27–30. [6] IX. 32.

[7] XII. 17. [8] IX. 29. [9] V. 29.

emptying his doctrine of all its power to lay hold of and control the heart.

This is seen especially when we turn to the theology of the poem. Here this antinomy between its thought of God as a Being lifted above the world, and that which knows him to be one who loves is discovered in other regions as well. He is both the Absolute who by the method of emanations relates himself to a remote universe, and at the same time one who dwells in all things as their life. There is one Unmanifested behind another, receding into remoteness, and there is the Manifested, the 'Supreme Person', 'wherein born beings abide, wherewith this whole universe is filled'.[1] The theory of emanations, the method of safeguarding the supremacy of the Absolute by graduating his relations with the universe, is the favourite method of Mysticism, and was no doubt an inheritance from older modes of thought. The Vyūhas or manifestations of the Vāsudevik school had already been called in to aid in this reconciliation, and some of the *Brahman* teaching of the Upaniṣads is not essentially irreconcilable with them. In his doctrine of works, however, this thinker had a new clue to the interpretation of the relation of the world to God and one which left room for a personal Creator. He moulds and remoulds the world; he sustains and controls it; but his works fetter him not, for he abides indifferent and unattached.[2] Of this Rule which is the Yoga *par excellence*, he is the Lord, 'Yogeśvara'. But this lordship of the Yoga has two aspects according as his unattachment to his works is interpreted as indifference or as unselfishness and love. From the latter and more ethical view proceeds all that is most theistic and most truly religious in the theology of this poem. From it comes naturally the doctrine of the divine grace that saves and that bears the worshipper to final peace,[3] and equally the doctrine of the divine incarnation.[4] It is here that from the point of view of the student of Theism the poem reaches its summit. The metaphysical strain in the

[1] VIII. 20, 22. [2] IX. 7–9. [3] XVIII. 62. [4] IV. 6–8.

poet's thought leads him elsewhere. His ethical insight bears him unfalteringly to this result.

All Theism, and not less that of the *Bhagavadgītā* than the rest, pines and dwindles in an atmosphere of impersonal intellectualism. From the point of view of Theism the failure of the religion here presented lies in its vacillation between two views of the nature of the highest good, that to which it is a state of contemplation and that which regards it as a state of self-sacrificing activity. That entanglement with *saṃsāra* is evil, Indian thought is fully convinced, but wherein the evil root of that *saṃsāra* consists it has not quite certainly determined. It hesitates between the view that the fetter that binds man to it is a selfish desire for reward, and the view that it is something that so belongs to the very fibre of earthly life that every movement of the mind and heart must be cast forth and stilled. Whether the pens of different writers wrote these diverse surmises of the truth or whether they are the work of one man in various moods we cannot determine with any assurance. There is no reason at all events to suppose that they could not have been held together within one complex personality, especially in that of one who had inherited both the teaching of the Upaniṣad seers and the traditions of the schools of *bhakti*. As we have already remarked in regard to the Upaniṣads, there is no greater contradiction here than we find in the case of the kindred teacher Eckhart. For him, too, God is both 'a non-God, a non-spirit, a non-person', and a Person, both *Brahman* and Vāsudeva, both the Godhead and God. For him evil is at one time self-will, and at another the very 'creatureliness' of the creature. He too seeks to reconcile the ways of knowledge and of action, though he reverses the relation in which the *Gītā* places them,[1] declaring that 'what a man has taken in by contemplation, that he pours out in love'.[2]

The soul is 'a portion' of the Lord,[3] an 'uncreated spark' of the divine, as kindred mystics of another age would call it.

[1] XVIII. 55. [2] Inge's *Mysticism*, p. 160. [3] XV. 7.

Matter is not unreal in itself, but unreal as apprehended by those who have not, by making the Lord their refuge, passed beyond the power of his *Yoga Māyā*.[1] Thus, while the world is real and has only to be seen in the light that he supplies,[2] the experiences of sense are not so, and have no effect upon the unchanging, indestructible soul, whose final goal is union with Vāsudeva himself. The expression 'shall come to me' that is so often used throughout the poem to designate man's supreme destiny of bliss cannot be supposed to suggest a condition of unconsciousness, though as a matter of fact the word *nirvāṇa* is used to describe it.[3] It is with this poet once more, as with Eckhart, who exhorts men to 'throw themselves upon the heart of God, there to rest for ever, hidden from all creatures'.[4] So long as both can think of the place of blessedness as a divine heart, of the goal as a fellowship, the thought that beckons them on is that of a union of the human soul with the divine in love and the consciousness of peace.

Thus in the *Bhagavadgītā* appear the outlines of a theistic system which aims at uniting speculation and religion, the philosophizings of the Upaniṣads and the ardours of the *bhakti* worshippers. It was at the same time an attempt to reconcile the claims of the contemplative and the active life. In this work for the first time full recognition is accorded to *bhakti* as possessing an honourable estate within the region of ideas. From its use here as well as throughout the *Mahābhārata* we are able to estimate in some measure the character of the religious emotion which the word connotes. From what Hopkins calls 'a typical epic passage illustrating the use of *bhakti*'[5] we learn that it is used to describe the devout sentiment of a worshipper 'who knows no other god in heaven',[6] as well as the corresponding response on the part of the deity so honoured. This latter is also described as the grace (*prasāda*) of the god.[7] The term is further applied to the

[1] VII. 14. [2] VII. 25. [3] V. 24. [4] Inge's *Mysticism*, p. 160.
[5] Hopkins in *J. R. A. S.*, July, 1911, pp. 72 ff.
[6] *Mbh.* III. 303; 3, 4. [7] *Mbh.* III. 31, 42.

devotion of a wife to her husband and of a loyal people to their king. In the view of Hopkins its use in the Epic indicates a preponderance of emotional over intellectual elements in the feeling which it conveys. '*Bhakti* leans to love very perceptibly, even to erotic passion, but it expresses affection of a pure sort as well as that of a sensual nature; which latter aspect, however, is to be found and cannot be ignored. In fact the danger of *bhakti*, become too ardent and lapsing into mystic eroticism, is apparent in the mediaeval expression of this emotion. It is not intellectual, yet the play of meaning between faith and love (perhaps trust) is generally present'.[1] This devotion is shown to various gods, to whom also the corresponding name of Bhagavat is applied. That name, according to Hopkins, may best be rendered Blessed—'he who is blessed with the possession of all good qualities and, by implication, makes blessed his *bhaktas*, those who have made him theirs and are devoted to him'.[2] From all this we see how well fitted were these words to gather round them a 'passionate Theism' and to describe the movements of affection that according to them unite together God and man. We have at the same time hints of the danger that, lacking some restraining influence, might betray its ardours, as it so often has in its history in India, into grossness and extravagance.

Out of those experiences and intuitions, so varied and dissonant, and echoing back through so many centuries of India's religious history, Rāmānuja and the other scholastic philosophers who came after him built up their various systems. To them we pass at once without tarrying over the enigmatic Vedānta Sūtras which they claim to expound. Of the *Bhakti-Yoga* Rāmānuja affirms that it is 'the burthen of all the Vedānta teaching'.[3] His theology is the consistent and detailed demonstration of the principles involved in the Theism which had been gradually through so long a time growing to

[1] Hopkins, op. cit. [2] Hopkins, op. cit.
[3] Rāmānuja's *Bhagavadgītā*, trans. by Govindācārya, p. 10.

consciousness of itself. Bhagavat is the Creator in the sense that from him issues forth at the dawning of a *kalpa*, and into him by his will at its close is absorbed again the entire universe. Before thus coming forth 'the fourfold sum of being' 'lies powerless in the folds of his alluring and *guṇa*-sated nature (*prakṛiti*)'.[1] Rāmānuja quotes with approval a passage from the *Mahābhārata* which says that all this universe composed of movable and immovable (things) is verily for Kṛiṣṇa's sake, and explains these last words as indicating that the universe is his accessory or accident (*śeṣa*). He has independent reality; it has reality only in him.[2] He is not implicated in creation, for he regards it unconcerned as a 'passive neutral',[3] the cause of the diverse fates of creatures being the deeds that they have done. 'The term *māyā* never signifies what is false',[4] though it signifies a view of things that leads men astray. Those who follow the path of devotion escape beyond 'this *guṇa*-full *māyā*'. Elsewhere *māyā* is rendered by Rāmānuja in the *Gītā* as the will of the Lord, by which he chooses, in distinction from creatures whom their *karma* compels, to be born among men.[5]

He who is not only the Soul of the world but the Soul of individual souls, 'ruling by his will',[6] can of his own free choice bestow illumination and strength upon those who seek him, and 'strong delusion that they should believe a lie' upon those who turn away from him.[7] He is other than the bound and freed souls, and may be compared in his relation to them to a king ruling his subjects.[8] Obedience to him procures by his grace 'supreme peace or cessation of all *karma* bonds'.[9] The released souls attain to the character of the Supreme Self, but not his essential character; they obtain 'sameness of nature with him', but not identity.[10] The love of the *jñānī*,

[1] Rāmānuja's *Gītā*, IX. 8; Govindācārya, p. 294.
[2] Op. cit., IV. 4; p. 136.
[3] Op. cit., IX. 9; p. 294.
[4] Op. cit., VII. 13; p. 240.
[5] Op. cit., IV. 6; p. 138.
[6] Op. cit., XV. 15; p. 474.
[7] Op. cit., XVI. 19.
[8] Op. cit., XV. 17.
[9] Op. cit., XVIII. 62; p. 561.
[10] *Śrī-Bhāṣya* I. 1.

the 'single-loving one' (*eka-bhaktiḥ*),[1] for his Lord is unfathomable and wins a return of love. Kṛiṣṇa in the *Gītā* is represented by his commentator as saying in this connexion in words that were echoed centuries later by a fellow mystic of the West, 'In the same manner as my servant cannot live without me—his highest goal—I cannot live without him. Verily, therefore, is he my very self (ātma).'[2]

In his commentary on the *Gītā*, more than in his *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, one realizes how truly Rāmānuja belongs to the succession of the *Bhagavadbhaktas*. There is the note of experimental religion in his praise of the way of devotion. He does not find the old word sufficient to express all that is in the heart of the worshipper who resorts to Kṛiṣṇa as his refuge. He describes it by another word which—whether original to him or not—was used by some of his followers to denote an attitude of still more complete surrender to the will of the Lord. *Prapatti* or resignation is used once or twice by Rāmānuja in his exposition of the *Gītā*,[3] and this with *ācāryābhimāna* or love for the teacher became the highest means of religious attainment in a later development of the *bhakti* system. This more extreme doctrine casts the whole task of salvation upon God and upon his spontaneous and unmotived grace, and holds that his mercy feels the pain of others as his own. The more orthodox doctrine held to the view of the divine grace as responding to men's supplication and endeavour. 'I bow before Mukunda's grace,' says Vedānta Deśika, one of the chief exponents of this teaching, 'which flows freely even unto the ignorant—a grace which springs of its own accord but acts on a cause.'[4] The former or more innovating sect, the Teṅgalais, ignored caste distinctions among their adherents and renounced all *dharmas*, while the Vaḍagalais, like Rāmānuja himself, followed a more conservative course. Perhaps one sees signs in the former of the danger of a spirit of

[1] Rāmānuja's *Gītā*, VII. 17. [2] Op. cit., VII. 18.
[3] Rāmānuja's Preface to *Gītā* VII and Commentary on VII. 14.
[4] *Vedānta Deśika*, by M. K. Tatacharya, p. 26.

devotion that has no standard of righteousness by which to measure the demands that its indebtedness lays upon it, and in the latter the opposite peril of a speedy return to formalism and tradition.

We pass now to the *Dvaita* system of Madhva with its emphatic discrimination between the Supreme Soul, finite souls and matter. All things, according to Rāmānuja, have their basis in the One, and, while not unreal, depend upon him as his manifestations. His view is that of 'qualified monism'; that of Madhva is frankly dualistic. The Lord Hari alone is the absolute Agent and Ruler, and while 'the souls are completely under his control' they are 'absolutely different entities'.[1] When the soul is called a 'portion' of the Lord, all that is meant is that it 'bears some reduced similitude to the Lord'.[2] All the names of gods in the Veda are but various names of Viṣṇu. Madhva is not a polytheist, according to one of his exponents, for Viṣṇu is the only independent being, and he is 'at the top of the series', 'beyond men and *devas*'.[3] He is the efficient cause of the universe but not its material cause, since it is different from him. Lakṣmī, the wife of Viṣṇu, is the presiding deity of *prakṛiti*. 'She is the receptacle of the Lord's will to conjoin soul with body and carry on the work of creation.'[4]

Madhva, like other Indian theists, taught that the goal of deliverance can only be attained by the divine grace. Along with this, however, went in his case a doctrine of salvation through Vāyu, the son of Viṣṇu, which is special to his system. On the other hand he divides souls into three classes according to their nature and destiny which apparently not even the grace of the Lord can overcome. The *sātvika* soul wins heaven inevitably, the *rājasa* soul revolves for ever in *saṃsāra*, while that in which *tamas* predominates goes to hell.

[1] Madhva on *Gītā* II. 24 (S. Subba Rau). [2] Op. cit., XV. 7.
[3] C. M. Padmanabha Char's *Life and Teachings of Śrī Madhvāchāryar*, p. 350.
[4] Op. cit., p. 305.

According to other interpreters the worst doom of the wicked in the view of the *Gītā* is rebirth as fierce beasts—'such incarnate existences as are opposed to affinity for Kṛiṣṇa'[1]—and punishment in a hell from which there is escape when the strength of evil *karma* has been exhausted. But Madhva's doctrine is more severe. In his view 'they go to the hell of eternal damnation after having been for a while in the cycle of *saṃsāra*'.[2]

The Śuddhādvaita system of Vallabhācārya is more important in its practice than in its theory. According to his doctrine of 'pure monism' the plane of *saṃsāra* is unreal, being created by the Lord's power of *avidyā*, but the cosmos which is evolved from him is real.[3] The Lord who is worshipped as Kṛiṣṇa—and especially under the form Bāl Gopāl, as the child Kṛiṣṇa—is represented as one who rejoices more in the joy of his followers than in ascetic discipline. A spirit of devotion, rising to ecstasy, is the means of supreme deliverance, while knowledge attains no further than release from *saṃsāra*. The Epicureanism of Vallabhācārya's teaching marks a new departure among the systems that claim to rest upon the authority of the Vedānta. There is a sinister significance in this admission to the ranks of orthodoxy of a view of life which, however much it had hitherto been accepted in practice, yet had concealed itself beneath a profession of renunciation. In this sect and in that of Caitanya the object of devotion is an erotic deity who is served by an erotic love. Rādhā is the model of the true worshipper in those *bhakti* cults, and it is the part of the devotee to seek to assume the attitude of a woman towards the sole male Being, Kṛiṣṇa. From such a conception of the relation of the worshipper and the worshipped, as well as from the *samarpaṇa* or self-devotion which Vallabhācārya required, and which involved the surrender of body, soul, and possessions

[1] Rāmānuja's *Gītā*, XVI. 20. [2] Madhva's *Gītā*, XVI. 19.
[3] L. D. Barnett's *Bhagavadgītā*, p. 56.

to the *guru*, it was inevitable, in the sensuous atmosphere of Kṛiṣṇaism, that gross abuses should result.

By this time the philosophical and theological powers of India appear to be largely exhausted. The sects that now appear have no new ideas to contribute. They are distinguished by their religious spirit or their moral attitude rather than by the doctrine they profess. In the case of the Rāmānandīs, indeed, there is this departure from the teaching of Rāmānuja, whom they claim to follow, that they assert that God in his essential being is *nirguṇa* and unknowable, but that the only way of salvation is by the worship of his *saguṇa* incarnations. 'There is no difference', says Tulsī Dās, 'between the material (*saguṇa*) and the immaterial (*aguṇa*); so declare saints and sages, the Veda and the Pūraṇas. The formless, invisible and uncreated Immaterial (*nirguṇa*) out of love for the faithful (*bhaktas*), becomes materialized (*saguṇa*). How can this be? In the same way as water is crystallized into ice. . . . In Rāma who is the Supreme Being and the sun of the world, the night of delusion can have no part whatever. . . . Delusion affects Rāma in the same way as smoke or a cloud or dust affects the brightness of the heavens.'[1] Similarly of the Nimbārka sect it is said that they affirm that 'the one infinite and invisible God, who is the only real existence is the only proper object of man's devout contemplation. But as the incomprehensible is utterly beyond the range of human faculties, he is partially manifested for our behoof in the book of Creation, in which natural objects are the letters of the universal alphabet and express the sentiments of the divine Author'.[2] Rādhā and Kṛiṣṇa symbolize the mysteries of the divine love, and as symbols it does not matter whether they were real personages or not.[3] Other adherents of *bhakti* seem to have kept their religion and their philosophy apart and to have found no

[1] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. *Doha* 122, 123 (Growse, I, p. 69).
[2] Growse's *Mathura*, p. 181. [3] Ibid.

difficulty in accepting an *advaita* theory while following for their heart's satisfaction the practice of devotion.

There is nothing new or valuable in the so-called *Śāṇḍilya* or *Nārada Sūtras*, late attempts in the manner of the *Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa to demonstrate the greatness of the way of emancipation by devotion. It does not seem to be clear whether the philosophical doctrine of the *Śāṇḍilya Sūtras* is *advaita* or *viśiṣṭādvaita*: the work is in either case an exaltation of the way of devotion or 'attachment to the Lord'[1] as higher than knowledge or works. The *Nārada Sūtras* are distinctly dualistic and warmer in their sentiment. They distinguish their doctrine from Śāṇḍilya's thus:—'Śāṇḍilya says *bhakti* is the unbroken feeling of the Universal Self in one's own self. But Nārada says it is surrendering all actions to God and feeling the greatest misery in forgetting God.'[2] But whether the followers of *bhakti* were whole-hearted Theists or whether they combined Theism with Agnosticism or with a monistic philosophy, the chief difference between one form of the religion and another appears now generally to depend upon whether it is inspired by the figure of Rāma or of Kṛiṣṇa, or whether it is an effort, as in the case of Swāmī Nārāyaṇ, to return to a more spiritual worship and a cleaner life.

To complete our conspectus of the theology of Indian Theism it remains for us to consider the system of *Śaiva Siddhānta* in the South—a system which, perhaps, from the theistic point of view is the most valuable of all that have sprung up upon the Indian soil. The three categories under which the teaching of the *Siddhānta* is grouped are, as we have already learned, those of *Pati* (the Lord), *paśu* (the flock), and *pāśa* (the bond). These are all eternal, but not all equally real. The Lord who is Śiva is supreme and without parts (*niṣkala*) and even *nirguṇa* in the sense that he is free from the three *guṇas* of matter—but for the purpose of his manifestation he assumes a *sakala* nature and he operates in

[1] Śāṇḍilya's *Sūtras*, I. [2] Nārada's *Sūtras* (Sturdy), 18 and 19.

the universe through his *śakti* or energy. The instrument of creation is Brahmā, himself his first creation. In such ways as these, in agreement with the ancient theory of emanations, the gulf is bridged between the finite and the infinite, and he who is pure spirit is shown as mingling with the impure world like a ray of light that quickens and illuminates.[1] The flock of souls is eternally existent likewise, but without energies or faculties, ' like birds sleeping in the night in the branches of some mighty tree, hardly to be distinguished from the tree itself, save that they live '.[2] There hangs over them a burden of old, eternal deeds whose fruit they must consume ere they can enter the final, blissful union with the Supreme. The Lord allots them their embodiment for which at the beginning of each aeon these alienated souls wait, crouching in the darkness. The only way to this end is the consuming of the deeds and hence the Lord with what is indeed a gracious purpose sends forth the energy of his 'delusion', evolving from *māyā* the phenomenal universe and clothing the souls with bodies. Thus there is *pāśa*, the bond, hindering that release which is union with Śiva.

Perhaps nowhere in Indian theology have theistic ideas found fuller or nobler expression than in this attempt to conceive of an eternal purpose of redemption governing the whole relation of the Supreme Lord to the universe. Nowhere, perhaps, has Indian Theism come nearer than here to overcoming the stubborn opposition that the *karma* doctrine presents to its fundamental conceptions of the supremacy and the gracious character of God. He sends forth the soul on his secular pilgrimage with a gracious purpose for his deliverance when the due time comes, and he interposes with the energy of his grace and burns up new deeds. There are four paths of this pilgrimage—that in which the soul serves God as a servant his master, that in which he serves him as a son his father, that in which he serves him as a friend his friend, and, highest of all, that in which he serves him as a wife her

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. lxxxii. [2] Op. cit., p. 18.

husband. So the soul makes its slow progress along the path to freedom and to a full illumination, guided and upheld by the 'Brahma-Śakti, the sleeping lady'.[1] It is as 'when one lights a lamp and awaits the dawning of the day'.[2] 'To those who have thus exhausted all *karma* by the grace of the visible guru (there is) no longing after sense pleasure, no birth or death, no bondage, sorrow or delusion.'[3] The final goal is reached when the three-fold *malam,—āṇava malam* (the original evil), *karma malam*, and *māyā malam* (matter)—is neutralized,[4] and the soul enters upon eternal union with Śiva—a relation which is 'not one, nor two, but non-dual, *advaita*.[5] 'The negative prefix in the word *advaita* does not negate the existence of two substances, but only a quality of the existence, i.e. the existence entirely independent or detached from each other'.[6] Thus, as the gracious work of Śiva proceeds and souls pass after their long pilgrimage into union with him, there is the hope that a time will come when all shall have obtained release, and Śiva shall be all in all.[7]

The breadth and dignity of this doctrine and its deep sense of the gracious character of God give it a place apart from other systems of Theism that have arisen in India. It may not have overcome the tremendous obstacles that the philosophical presuppositions, of which the Indian mind seems to find it impossible to rid itself, place in its way. The *Śaiva Siddhānta* has not succeeded in explaining the origin of evil; its attempt, which is similar to that of Plotinus, to explain the world of suffering souls as 'a result of the *transeunt* activity of the One, as an effect of its overpowering energy, which yet has no connexion with its inner nature',[8] is philo-

[1] *Tiruvunthiar* in *Siddhānta Deepika*, VIII, p. 187.
[2] Umāpathi in Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. lxxxvi.
[3] *Tiruvunthiar*, op. cit., p. 188.
[4] Rev. H. W. Schomerus in the *Gospel Witness*, V, p. 178.
[5] *Tiruvunthiar*, op. cit., p. 190.
[6] An exposition of Śaiva Siddhānta reported by Rev. H. W. Schomerus in the *Gospel Witness*, V, p. 179.
[7] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. 18.
[8] Caird's *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, II, p. 344.

sophically unsatisfying. But it has grasped and set forth in far broader outline than elsewhere in Indian thought the basal conception of Theism that God is a moral being, governed from first to last by a purpose of compassion. If its doctrine of grace has not been fully moralized, and if it is confused by association with physical ideas of energy and with mythological ideas of Brahma Śakti similar to those which were associated with the Lakṣmī of other systems, yet it strove to overcome these limitations with a measure of success that gives it perhaps the highest place among Indian theistic constructions. When we consider especially the religious materials with which it had to work, and the intellectual anarchy amid which it arose, we cannot but admire profoundly the theological breadth of view of its thinkers and the fervour and sincerity of its saints.

We have sketched briefly some of the main features of the chief theological systems that have been built up in India about the devotional experience of *bhakti*. The theology of the more popular movements that sprang up later all over the land, and were less concerned with doctrinal statement than with a direct appeal to the heart and to the life need only be dealt with in respect of some of its subsidiary developments. In the main they agree with what the Śri-saṃpradāya of Rāmānuja teaches, but they seldom define the boundaries that separate them from the Māyā-vāda Vedānta, and are for the most part content to commend the *bhakti mārga* as a good and safe and satisfying way for common men to walk in. 'The knowledge of the Supreme', says Tulsī Dās, 'is of two kinds, like fire which is either internal or visible; each is in itself incomprehensible, but is comprehended by means of the name, and therefore I say that the name is greater than either Brahma or Rāma.'[1] Here 'the name' is only one aspect of the mediation of 'the Unutterable', who apart from such mediation is so hard for the heart to find. 'Though the unchangeable Lord is in our very soul, the

[1] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. *Doha* 26 (Growse, I, p. 18).

whole creation is in slavery and wretchedness till he is revealed in definite shape, and is energized by the name.'[1] This pragmatic view is put more plainly in another passage of the same poem where Rāma himself expounds the doctrine of faith to his brother Lakṣman. 'After piety, asceticism, and after ascetic meditation, knowledge, and knowledge, as the Vedas declare, is the giver of salvation. But that at which I melt most quickly, brother, is faith which is the blessing of my votaries; it stands by itself without another support, and is above all knowledge, whether spiritual or profane. Faith, brother, is an incomparable source of happiness, and only to be acquired by the favour of a saint.'[2] It is 'the easy path by which men may find me'. So in the *Sat'saī*, which is attributed to Tulsī Dās, it is said—and this and no conviction of its absolute truth is the reason with them all for the preference of the way of *bhakti*—'The way of knowledge to a *nirguṇa* Brahman is full of countless difficulties.'[3] But in contemplation of this excellent way all rival paths are forgotten. The nine kinds of *bhakti*, if only they were made use of at their fullest meaning, are largely inward and ethical. They include, besides devotion to the lotus feet of the *guru* and the singing of the praise of Rāma, prayer, 'in every action a loving and persevering piety', contentment with what one has, and 'a guileless simplicity towards all and a hearty confidence in Rāma without either exultation or dejection'.[4]

Faith, in at least the Christian sense of the word, is at once an affirmation of truth and a surrender to the truth affirmed. In the case of the *bhakti* of the Indian saints it almost entirely occupies the latter attitude. The affirmation of truth is a secondary concern. We have seen that in the *Mahābhārata* *bhakti* is often applied to the loyal but perhaps undiscriminating love of a wife to her husband. It is the same at its very highest to Tukārām likewise. He speaks also again and

[1] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. *Doha* 26 (Growse, I, p. 18).
[2] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, III. *Doha* 13 (Growse, III, p. 14).
[3] Translation by Dr. Grierson in *I. A.* XXII, p. 229.
[4] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, III. *Doha*, 29, 30 (Growse, III, p. 30).

again with much devotional fervour of the Motherhood of God. His heart, and Nāmdev's, cries, to use the language of the latter poet, 'like the child separated from its mother whom it has missed'. At the same time these teachers for whom *bhakti* was a practical guide to life could not fail to be aware of the danger of a religion that was subjective and self-centred and too exclusively emotional. No doubt it was a sense of this danger that caused the appearance of the 'cat' and 'monkey' schools in regard to the operation of the divine grace. The North India sects seemed to have belonged mainly to the latter group, and maintain the efficacy and the necessity of disinterested works. With Tukārām, for example, *bhakti* meant service of Viṭṭhal, but such service was as yet imperfectly ethicized. It meant 'singing his name, reciting his praises, spreading his glory by precept and example'.[1] It had a considerable moral connotation according to the more modern exposition of the *Bhakta-kalpadruma* (1866), but even there we find placed side by side, abstaining from falsehood, theft, adultery, and not eating very indigestible food, and not going by night upon a mountain. One work, which is indeed a note of a truly ethical religion, is the preaching of the gospel to the world, or 'the call to one's fellow men to sing the name and save themselves'. 'If a man be skilled in words and learned let him compose histories of the Holy One. . . . Often hath it been said to such an One, "Cleanse thy voice and thy heart by telling of the glory of the Holy One", and this one will give answer, "Sir, I am busy describing the doctrine of the identity of the universe with the deity". . . . If a man turn not his family and his household towards the gospel of grace and teach not the knowledge that holdeth thereunto, then the sin, lasting his life long, lieth upon the heads of his parents who trained him not up to teach and showed him not its necessity.'[2]

[1] Professor Patwardhan's *Tukārām's Doctrine of Bhakti*, *Indian Interpreter*, vol. VII, p. 27.

[2] *Bhakta-kalpadruma*, translated by Dr. Grierson, in *J. R. A. S.*, April, 1908, pp. 357, 360.

Finally, we see that the power of fervent *bhakti* is able at its highest even to attempt two things which in India seem to connote the impossible—to annul the terrors of transmigration, that law that looms so terrible above every religious experience and aspiration of the Indian saints, and to break the adamantine chains of caste. To indicate its relation to the former, we shall quote a passage from the *Sat'saī*, a work which, whether actually by Tulsī Dās or not, may be taken as embodying the teaching of his school. '*Karma* is, as it were, the wings of the bird-like soul, wings by the support of which the soul continually makes progress. . . . Wherever the soul may go, if it do *karma* with a selfish object (i.e. to obtain salvation) it must remain dependent upon *karma* alone; but if it does *karma* with no selfish object, that is, merely in order to please the Lord, that *karma* is no longer a fetter; it gives faith and salvation; nay, it is an agent of both.'[1] So also we are assured that for Tukārām 'the infinite round of reincarnation itself loses all its terrors before the prospect of the continuance of the privilege of association with God in *bhakti*. If Tukā could keep on serving his Lord, if he could practise *bhakti*, as he finally came to conceive it, he would not mind, yea, he would even pray for, a return again and again to this world.'[2] Towards caste the ideal attitude of the *bhakta* is that of Rāma in Tulsī Dās's poem: 'I recognize no kinsmanship save that of faith; neither lineage, family, religion, rank, wealth, power, connexions, virtue, nor ability. A man without faith is of no more account than a cloud without water.'[3] But the *bhakti* ardour that aspires to that high level of brotherhood can only reach it and lay aside its natural arrogance for a little while at the god's festival and within his temple courts. What stable theology and what enduring social order could be built upon what after all is only 'a feeling fond and fugitive'?

[1] Translation by Dr. Grierson in *I. A.* XXII, p. 229.

[2] Professor Patwardhan in *Indian Interpreter* (vol. VII, April, 1912), p. 28.

[3] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*, III. *Doha* 29 (Growse, III, p. 30).

PART III

CRITICISM AND APPRECIATION

Any attempt to estimate the value of Indian Theism whose long and chequered history we have sought to trace, and whose theology we have reviewed, necessarily implies a standard by which it can be measured. We must have some conception of what Theism ought to be, if we are to determine the excellences and the defects of those constructions of it that have been built up by the Indian mind and heart. It is true that it must at least have room within itself for the three great postulates of God, freedom and immortality. But these words admit of a wide variety of definition. To estimate the value of the doctrines that have appeared in India we must have a clear conception of the implications of Theism; we must be able to discriminate between what in any system is definitely theistic in character and what is antagonistic to theistic belief and aspiration. We must, in a word, have some criterion by which the claims of the doctrines we are examining can be tested. To attempt to appreciate the worth of any system by reference to an abstract speculative ideal is a peculiarly unfruitful enterprise. We have learned enough from the modern doctrines of Evolution and the modern philosophy of Pragmatism to realize the importance of keeping ourselves in relation with the facts of things as they are. Religion even at its very highest is still something relating to men, and only of worth as it speaks to their hearts. Therefore Indian as well as other systems of Theism are best estimated by comparison with other doctrines that have awakened elsewhere in response to similar needs in other hearts. And especially the theistic conjectures of Indian saints and mystics can most usefully be

evaluated by comparison with what we may describe as the standard Theism of Christianity. If accordingly we make use of the main conceptions of the Christian religion as our standard of comparison, we may be able without dogmatism to arrive at some secure estimate of what is most precious and what is least so, from the point of Theism, in the Indian religious development.

There is, of course, a real continuity between them and the Christian faith—a continuity which springs from the common fears and aspirations among which they move and in which they have their roots. No suggestion of censure nor any attitude of dogmatism is implied in such a comparison as is here proposed. Our task is that of the historian. As we listen to the poignant cries that echo through the temple of mankind we may compare and contrast them; we may estimate their religious value; we do not condemn. We do not say that to understand all is to forgive all, for to forgive is not the province of the investigator, nor indeed of any fellow member of the same human race that uttered itself in these hopes and fears. But to understand—not all, for that is impossible, but some of the long travail of the human heart in its search for God, and especially to understand something of the travail of the Indian spirit as we can discern it through the dust and haze of centuries, is to have every instinct of easy criticism changed to sympathy and deep respect. We watch with reverence the age-long striving to draw near to God, to find assurance in His fellowship. But where He has been found most fully and men's hearts have been most fully satisfied—that we recognize as the central shrine—there is the place of His richest revelation. Without censure and without dogmatism we have to endeavour to understand why He is present here rather than there, why He is found by the saint that seeks Him along one road, while He is only a dying echo of His own cry, a shadow of His own desire, to one who seeks Him by another.

Approaching the Indian Theisms then in this spirit of

respect, and taking with us the principles of Christian Theism for purposes not of judgement but of comparison, we are impressed at once by the number of these points of contact and comparison. In the early days of the history of Christianity, when the religion of Mithra was its most powerful and active rival, the surface likeness between the two religions was such that some of the Christian Fathers were ready to suggest that Mithraism was a diabolical travesty of their religion, devised by the arch-deceiver to lead men astray. It is not in that spirit that we note the parallelisms between the Indian Theisms and the Christian faith. We recognize in them testimony to the universal needs and the universal religious aspirations of the race of man. For that reason they share with Christianity the character of being personal religions, religions in which the relation of the worshipper to the god is a personal relation. For that reason also they at least have some of the marks of universal religions. They are the religions of those who are seeking present help in this life and some hope for another. Measuring them by their ideals, and not by their failures and their scandals, these Theisms represent an advance on the old tribal polytheisms, a genuine and earnest endeavour to slough formalism and naturalism, and mount to a higher spiritual region. Just because of the common humanity from which they spring, and because of the reality of their effort to reach a spiritual fellowship with God, these Theisms, for at least some sincere moments in their history, reveal in one form or another their affinity with a religion which, whatever the truth of its ultimate claims, surely speaks deeply to the heart of man and opens abundantly to him the heart of God. There is nothing strange, then, in the many parallelisms both in thought and in ritual which disclose themselves. The belief, for example, in incarnations or mediations by one means or another between the far-off God and man, in the grace of God, and in the value of faith, are only such as the logic of the heart in the great moments when she probes herself might well demand and discover. Sacramental feasts, baptisms,

initiations, 'mysteries', are natural media and symbols by which the unseen is made real and brought near. There are these and other impressive elements of resemblance between the Indian theisms and Christianity as there no doubt are as well in the case of other ethnic Theisms. To estimate the true value of these likenesses they must be examined at closer quarters. There are at the same time not less obvious and striking differences. Especially there is what we may describe as the differentia of practically the whole of the thought of India, with the exception of that of the earliest Vedic period, the doctrine of *karma* as that is linked with the belief in transmigration. We seem never even in the most theistic periods of Indian theistic aspiration to escape from this conception—which, as Dr. Grierson has said 'hangs like a pall'[1] over all the *bhakti* teaching even of the North India saints. Whatever the root from which this belief has sprung, whether or not we are to conceive it as an inheritance from ancient animism which a later reflection has sought to reinterpret and rationalize—there is no doubt that it is now 'greater than all herbs' in India and overspreads and shadows all the land. The power of the deed is so complete and for the most part, we must add, so unmoral that it obviously leaves little room in the universe for a God, such as Theism postulates, to breathe in, and no territory over which He can rule. The dominion of *karma* is universal. 'As a man acts, as he conducts himself, so will he be born.'[2] There is no place for repentance in the Hindu doctrine of *karma*, though in Buddhism room has been found for this ethical emotion (*saṃvega*). This is not the moral law that 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'. Were it so there would be no antagonism between it and faith in a God whose will is righteousness. But right action binds a man no less securely to the wheel of rebirth than does wrong. 'How shall there be in this *saṃsāra* (this cycle of rebirths)', says one scripture, 'any uncaused action?' Every

[1] *J. R. A. S.*, April, 1908, p. 341.
[2] *Bṛihad. Up.* IV. iv. 5.

moment of man's life is the direct result of some act that he has done; his life is an endless chain of close-linked deeds, all made of the same stuff, and all, whether good or evil, it would seem, inevitable and unbreakable. 'As among a thousand cows', says the *Mahābhārata*, 'a calf will find its mother, so the deed previously done will find and follow its doer.' With a certainty no less sure than that of death itself this 'shadow' (*adṛiṣṭa*, the unseen) through all time 'sits and waits' for man. This doctrine seems to have discovered the secret of perpetual motion; for the working out of *karma* is always producing new *karma* to be worked out farther and, in the words of Deussen, the clock of retribution in the very act of running down winds itself up again.[1] As this law has no limit in its apparent duration—for *saṃsāra* had no beginning and we can perceive no end to it—so it has no limit in the extent of its application. It controls every 'action', whether god's or man's. It governs the operations of nature; by it the universe is destroyed and again renewed.

It is of the first importance that we should consider what is the influence upon the theistic aspirations of the people of this country of this extraordinarily powerful and pervading doctrine, and how it affects them by giving them a certain direction, and presenting to them certain specific problems. Of Christianity we can say three things with certainty, that it brings men into fellowship with a personal God, that it is through and through ethical in its purpose, and that it is always a religion of grace. The presence, on the other hand, in Indian religion of the *karma* doctrine comes in the way of each of these theistic aims. It confronts Theism in its effort to unfold its meaning with the difficulty, for example, of finding a place for a personal God in the midst of this iron framework which so grips the universe. It presents it further with the problem of explaining the relation of a free ethical personality, such as Theism postulates, to its rigid legalism. It also opposed its goal of a negative release to the

[1] Deussen, *Das System des Vedānta*, p. 381.

theistic hope of a blessed fellowship with God. Before considering the points of contact in faith and ritual between Indian and Christian Theism it will be necessary to examine the influence that this *karma* doctrine has exercised in setting them apart.

I

It is obvious that it is not easy to find any place for God that is worthy of Him within such a mechanical system of requital as that of *karma*. For Indian Theism God is either one who has to yield to it, or one to whom it has to yield, and in either case the deity emerges maimed. He is generally, as M. Poussin has observed, 'either an Oriental despot, arbitrarily imputing sin or virtue, and assigning hell or heaven to his creatures', or 'only an Organizer of the world, keeping an account of the actions (*karma*) of creatures, in order to ensure their due recompense and after each period of chaos, reconstructing the universe in order to set each creature in the place that befits it'.[1] The Indian Theist, for whom the *karma* doctrine was an axiom, found himself in a sore dilemma. If God had His hand upon the world at all, if He was engaged in its concerns, then He was no God, but a fettered soul, needing to be freed from *saṃsāra* as much as man himself. If, on the other hand, he was conceived as free, then it was a condition of his freedom that he have no connexion with the world and no influence upon it. It is the logic of this argument that made atheists of the Buddhist and the Sāṃkhyan and the Jain. The Jain addresses petitions to the Jina, but what reality can there be in a worship that is rendered to one who is removed from the world and all its concerns, and unable, therefore, to respond? The subjective exercise of self-purifying will not long persist in the face of such a doctrine. Nor, on the other hand, can theistic faith rest permanently in the idea of a God out of relation to its conception of the order of the universe, or able arbitrarily to

[1] *E.R.E.* II. 183².

set aside its laws. The fervour of devotion may make us deaf for a time to the claims of reason, but it can only be for a time. When the tide of the emotion ebbs, problems are revealed to reflection as having only been submerged, not solved. The result is an emotional Theism of hope, alternating with the intellectual acceptance of a doctrine that is very near to despair. Such seem to have been the real character of many of the popular *bhakti* worships. Their adherents were either simple men who did not attempt to correlate their ideas and for whom the instinct of worship was enough, or they were people who deliberately divided the house of their thought between the intellect and the heart, and had for each room a different and appropriate demeanour. In either case the Theism that results is a precarious product, and of little permanent religious value. For those who desired seriously to organize their thought into a unity there seemed no alternative between abandoning Theism altogether and ignoring this stubborn doctrine so apparently irreconcilable with faith in the supremacy over the world of a moral personality. Never, we may say, in the whole course of the Indian theistic development is this antinomy fully resolved. Never is the attempt resolutely made to re-think the *karma* doctrine so as to personalize it, and give it a content more fully ethical and so more reconcilable with Theism.

We see the same problem emerging within Christianity, and the same peril to Theism presenting itself there, when, as is the case especially in recent years, the conception of the uniformity of natural law has become an obsession so complete as either to thrust out God altogether from the universe of the knowable or to bind Him a captive in chains. There is no room for real theistic hopes to breathe in such an atmosphere. Prayer is futile, and where there is not the faith that enables men to pray there is no God with whom there can be fellowship. The spiritual world must be fully recognized as higher than, and as enveloping, the natural world, and God be over all, blessed for ever. There are two kinds

of legalism that may bring the spirit into bondage, and the *karma* doctrine partakes of the nature of them both. Of its moral legalism we shall speak presently. Its natural legalism with which we are now dealing is no less fatal to a free and a courageous spiritual religion. The power of Theism can only be revealed where these bonds are broken and where the idea is revealed of a God whose will, which is supreme, is love and righteousness. 'There is a Kingdom', says a Christian writer, 'into which none enter but children, in which the children play with infinite forces, where the child's little finger becomes stronger than the giant world; a wide Kingdom, where the world exists only by sufferance; to which the world's laws are for ever subjected; in which the world lies like a foolish, wilful dream in the solid truth of the day.'[1] It is the claim of the Christian interpreter of the meaning of the world that history reveals the operation of supernatural powers which transcend and annul the lower laws of nature. It is his claim that in the lives of nations that have been called to great tasks of civilization, and that respond to the call, the ordinary laws of declension and decay are arrested and a 'rejuvenescence', 'a new era of vision and power', comes to them which can only be explained as the replenishing of their life from the Source of life.[2] So also it is found to be the case in the individual life, where the spiritual fact of conversion, the experience of the renewal and illumination of the soul testifies to the operation of a paramount divine activity to whose higher control 'the world's laws are for ever subjected'. In such a region the laws that are called *karma* lie, like the kindred laws of nature, 'like a foolish wilful dream'. They are 'māya' in the midst of that higher reality of permanence and power. In such a region as that man's faith finds God, and, finding Him, 'cries like a Captain for eternity', but not elsewhere.

The most courageous attempt to transcend this bondage is

[1] Fleming Stevenson's *Praying and Working*, p. 317.
[2] See W. P. Paterson's *Rule of Faith*, p. 110.

that of the Śaiva Siddhānta system, a system which for that reason we may pronounce the noblest among Indian Theisms. It passes beyond the view that God is merely the One who presides indifferently over the embodiment of souls and even beyond the more theistic doctrine that 'the whole universe must be for ever inert, unintelligent and lifeless without the operations of *Pati* and his manifested energy'.[1] It is true that the attribution to God of movements of grace towards the imprisoned soul is in itself an indication in the various theistic doctrines of a revolt from the grim law of retribution, but it is in the Śaiva Siddhānta alone that we find this conception of God's gracious energy realized in some measure as a higher law, transcending and taking up into itself the lower. It comprehends within the sweep of its doctrine of grace the whole of the world-process, teaching that the purpose of the Lord from first to last is gracious, and that the end in view throughout is the soul's emancipation, and his entrance into blissful union with his Lord. Thus, though the constraint of the *karma* doctrine still lies heavy on the Deliverer and the way by which he must travel to the goal is long, though he can only order things so that 'deeds eternal and inexorable may be consumed',[2] and it is only at a certain point in the long history that he can put forth his gracious energy of enlightenment—though in these ways the gracious will of Śiva is limited and hindered, yet it is an immense advance towards an ethical Theism that a gracious moral purpose in a measure supersedes and controls the lower law of recompense. Thus here a higher moral order makes its appearance, labouring to transcend the legal and retributive order of which the *karma* doctrine is the most extreme example. Greek theology was able to moralize the idea of fate and to combine Nemesis and Zeus in the one thought of a moral Governor. But this strange Indian conception was far more intractable and far harder to take up into a doctrine of moral ends. The

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. lxxxiv.
[2] Op. cit., p. lxxxii.

law of *karma* proved too stubbornly natural, too deeply rooted in a non-moral world-view to be transmutable by the Indian spirit, which is not at any time ethically energetic. The god of its Theism never triumphs completely over this rival, and has to be content with a divided empire.

II

This brings us to the second problem which we have indicated as suggested by the endeavour of the theistic instinct to assert itself in India alongside of the *karma* doctrine that is the problem of the relation of a free ethical activity, such as Theism postulates, to a rigid legalism. For Theism to be possible man must be recognized as a self-determining agent, whose character is not eternally fixed, but for whom the future may be a land of hope and promise. He must be one who can, God helping him, burst the bonds of habit, and enter into the experience of a moral victory that is really his, and the God whom he knows must be One who can bring him into such an experience. There must be windows in his sky through which the light of divine forgiveness can stream into his penitent heart. The black clouds that legalism breeds—the clouds of sin and retribution—must not be doomed to hang for ever as an unbroken pall over his life.

In this connexion we have to note another suggestion, besides that to which we have already referred of the operation of the divine grace, by means of which a lightening of the darkness of *karma* legalism is made possible, and a way of escape discovered from the grasp of its retribution. In the *Gītā* especially, the view is elaborated that no fetters of *saṃsāra* bind the man who has no desire for the fruit of his action, and who lives his life 'devoid of attachment'. Just as in the Śaiva Siddhānta we have the idea of a higher moral purpose in the divine mind seeking to overcome the rigid process of legalism, so here we have the idea of a higher

moral means making its appearance within the process itself, so as, not to cut its bonds, for that is still impossible, but to avoid forming new ones. In both cases a nobler ethical order is correcting the less noble legal one. In the one case it is the teleological criterion that gives the new idea its authority over the old; in the other, what is significant is the moral superiority of the new attitude of non-attachment to action. Both views implicitly condemn the *karma* law as imperfectly ethicized. In the first case that law is condemned because it implies that life has no moral purpose; it is a road that leads nowhere. In the other, it is condemned because it is not based upon the fundamental distinction between good and evil. The fetter which binds is action, good no less than bad. Not evil desire, but desire itself is the enemy. Thus in both cases what is recognized as defective in the *karma* theory is its incomplete moralization. In both cases, however, the attempt to accomplish this is inadequate. The attempt to get rid of motive altogether is predestined to failure. It was no doubt the *karma* doctrine itself that set the Indian spirit seeking a solution of its problem in this impossible direction. For in making motive itself the fetter, instead of evil motive, it turned its back upon the ethical goal and suggested the endeavour to escape from the region of the ethical altogether instead of suggesting that its ethics should be deepened. The philosopher, no less than the workman, who 'tries to do better than well, doth but confound his skill with covetousness'. The endeavour to get rid of desire is an endeavour to pass beyond the good, and ends in confounding the conscience with covetousness. For there is nothing in the world or out of it, we may be sure, that is better than a good will.

When the *karma* doctrine is called a system of legalism, what is meant is that it is a system in which the whole emphasis is placed upon the isolated acts that make up a man's life, so as to make them in their separation and complexity dominant over man's destiny. Such legalism inevitably and invariably crushes out hope from the soul. It was the

same with the very different legalism of the Jews, and it was mainly for that reason that St. Paul condemned it and turned from it with enthusiasm to the message of life and hope that he found in Christ. The array of deeds, whether, as in the case of the Hindu, of evil deeds of the past that he cannot escape from or, in the case of the Pharisee, of good deeds in the future that he can never accomplish, strikes fear and despair into his soul. 'All who depend on works of law are under a curse', said St. Paul. The attitude of the Hindu to *karma* is different from that of St. Paul, the Christian apostle, but the resulting situation in which he finds himself is closely similar. The school of *bhakti* mitigates the hopelessness of the situation only to the extent of embodying the law in the person of a lawgiver, while still the idea of law remains. But there is no real change in the religion from its essential legalism though a personal God is postulated. He is a God in regard to whom this scheme of rewards and punishments still holds, either as the expression of His will or as a rival and independent power ruling side by side with Him. It is true on the whole of every Indian type of religion, as has been already indicated, that its most obvious and commanding feature is this *karma* aspect of life and destiny. It is true in consequence of every type of Indian religion—however this may occasionally be for a time concealed by emotional ardours—that it is essentially legalist, occupied with laws not principles, with natural sequences rather than spiritual results. 'A force that draws from itself more than it contains,' says Bergson, 'that gives more than it has, is precisely what is called a spiritual force.' A God who is the source of spiritual power, from whom flow streams of recreating spiritual energy, a God, not of law or *karma*, but in a far higher sense, of righteousness—that is the God that dwells at the centre and the summit of Christian Theism.

Thus the *karma* doctrine in its aspect as a moral legalism is no less opposed to a high spiritual conception of God than in its aspect as a natural legalism. Whatever hinders the

freedom of man's spiritual development at the same time cramps his thought of God. A single illustration will help to show how Indian Theism, because of its bondage to the *karma* idea, has been unable to rise to a high conception of the divine character. It is supplied by an account that a Brahman convert to Christianity has given of what he was taught in his home. To his parents God was a personal God. 'They had nothing of the philosophic, advaitic, or pantheistic doctrine.' 'My mother', he says, 'repeatedly brought home to my soul, by means of illustrations drawn from human life, that one fundamental principle underlies all God's dealings and ordering of the experiences and fortunes of man, namely, the one principle that whatsoever a man soweth, he reapeth. The mills of God grind slowly and surely. The result of this was that it became a habit in me to refer every sorrowful experience which fell to my lot, to some past "wrongdoing", which bore fruit in this sorrowful experience. As I grew from childhood to boyhood the personal God in whom I believed became a holy God, a God who just because he must rule and judge righteously will not forgive our sins, but demand the full penalty even to the last *pie*. My father was a pleader, and the principle according to which the courts of justice dealt with the culprits confirmed these thoughts.' He goes on to tell how as he grew older an increasingly acute hunger filled his soul for the help of God in the perils of life. 'This acute hunger arose in my soul when I was about eighteen years old, and I could see no way of its satisfaction. If God is to be true to His principle, as I conceived it in my boyhood, by letting nothing in heaven or earth (not even Himself) stand in the way of or prevent our sinful past bearing the fruit of bringing misery and penalty in the present and future, how can I at the same time expect Him to help me through whatsoever may happen in the present and future?'[1] In this conception of Him God is conceived of as in bondage to His own laws that, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews would

[1] *Indian Interpreter*, VII, pp. 161, 162.

describe them, are those 'of a carnal commandment', that is to say, temporary in their character and imperfectly spiritualized. God, in this view of Him, is one who imposes restraints, a centre of negation. He is not a source of spiritual force, of creative and renewing power. Herein lies a fundamental difference between the Christian religion with its message of hope, because it releases transforming spiritual energies, and every static, negative, legal, system—such as are all those in which the *karma* doctrine rules—which inevitably produces in its adherents the attitude of the slave. Their only issue is spiritual bondage, despair. The systems that are linked with the *karma* doctrine are blinded by their occupation with laws to the fact of higher spiritual and ethical principles. They cannot see the wood for the trees. 'In religion', says Jowett, 'we should take care of the great things, and the trifles of life will take care of themselves. Christianity is not an art acquired by long practice; it does not carve and polish human nature with a graving tool; it makes the whole man; first pouring out his soul before God, and then casting him in a mould.' A true spiritualism implies, as Professor William James points out, the affirmation of an eternal moral order and the letting loose of hope.

The importance of these facts in relation to the theistic development in India is due to the intimate relation between Theism and ethics. Theism can only come to full fruition when it is ethical throughout. Every unethical element in it cramps it. And nothing has cramped Indian Theism more than the imperfectly ethical character of the *karma* doctrine. The aim of Christianity is to produce a Kingdom of God, that is, a brotherhood of good men in fellowship with a good God. The aim of any religion in which the law of *karma* is central is the allotment of rewards and punishments, and its operation is so mechanical that to administer this justice no judge is needed. The one is judicial and deals with mechanical laws; the other is moral and deals with moral forces. 'The moral legislation of God' in the Christian view 'is, under all circumstances, the means towards the moral commonwealth, the

Kingdom of God. The attribute of God as Founder and Ruler of His Kingdom is therefore absolutely superior to His attribute as Lawgiver.'[1] It is of the very essence of any *bhakti* doctrine, as it is of Christianity, to recognize the uplifting and redeeming power of love, but such is the grip of *karma* legalism upon the Indian soul that it never is able to admit this truth unreservedly. In the loving devotion of the Lord that binds no fetters, and in His love to man which is free from all self-seeking, as well as in the Buddha's 'compassion for all creatures', we have the germ of the higher morality which a religion of redemption recognizes and obeys. But the hostile elements have never been completely assimilated. It is only the heat of an emotional ardour that can transcend the rigour of this law of requital; and Indian Theism is not able long to maintain such ardour. When the tide of feeling ebbs, the grim rocks of retribution disclose themselves once more, and the victim feels himself a helpless victim in the grasp of an inevitable law. Many an Indian seeker must have echoed in reference to this *karma* bondage the cry of St. Paul, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?'

Love and penitence and those other spiritual fountains in the soul that are able to give it 'each instant a fresh endowment', from which 'the new is ever upspringing', do not come to their own within the boundaries of Indian thought. That this is so is due unquestionably to the influence of the law of *karma*. Its resolution of human life into a series of acts mechanically related, its self-centred individualism, keeps it at what we must describe as a low level. It cannot in consequence enter into the full kingdom of Theism. There is not scope in it for the rich operation of God's redeeming grace. That grace is conceived of in Indian Theism mainly as able at the most to help a soul here and there to escape the coils of *saṃsāra*. Only in the Śaiva Siddhānta, which may or may

[1] Ritschl's *Justification and Reconciliation* (Eng. tr.), pp. 91 f., quoted in Barbour's *Philosophical Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 286.

not have gained a hint from Christian teaching, does the thought dawn upon them of a gracious divine purpose of redemption. Even there that is a purpose which this imperious law controls and thwarts. Further, we note that this *karma* doctrine does not permit in correspondence to the love and grace of God the summons to love and help between man and man, 'the bearing of one another's burdens', which is the higher ethical law described in the Christian religion as 'the law of Christ'. A religion which has the *karma* doctrine at its centre has no room for such free redemptive activity. But Theism, as we see it, for example, in Christian Theism, finds in such activities of love the very life of its spirit. Its conception of God and of the spiritual nexus between man and God implies the possibility of forgiveness and sanctification on the part of God, the inflow of spiritual power, the contagion of spiritual help; it implies the possibility of new beginnings in the moral life; it implies that man should give himself to save his brother, and that God especially must needs come in all the moral *śakti*—the energy—of His grace for man's redemption.

The note thus of a fully ethical Theism, such as Christianity is, is always freedom, freedom in the service of the highest moral ends. The only hindrance in the way of the accomplishment of the divine purpose of grace in the view of Christianity is due to the completeness with which this is true of it. Man's moral freedom may thwart that purpose; nothing else can. To limit man's freedom for the sake of the divine transcendence is not to exalt God, for the greatness of the grace of God and the splendour of the Kingdom towards which His grace is working depend upon the freeness of the surrender to Him of those He saves and over whom He reigns. God must be limited by nothing save what proceeds from His own moral nature and which in limiting exalts Him. That is the only limit which Christianity recognizes as placed upon the sovereignty of God. He must rule over a freely surrendered people; His supremacy is solely and securely moral. We

must agree with Tennyson when he is reported as maintaining that free-will while 'apparently an act of self-limitation by the Infinite' is yet 'a revelation by Himself and of Himself'.[1] But the limitation which the law of *karma* places upon God is of another kind. Its limitation of Him is a limitation to a lower sphere than the highest. He is prevented from winning men to the free love of goodness by the exercise of His mercy and His grace. His grace cannot reach them, and they cannot respond to it. The free act of penitence and surrender which brings the divine deliverance, according to the Christian teaching, is not unregulated, nor is it unmotived or unattached to fruit. But it is freedom for the service of the good. Its fruit is holiness which no selfishness can desire. Indian thought often conceives of the order of *saṃsāra* as a region of unreality and the god of that world as, to a higher view, equally unreal. Of course such a provisional Theism, such a Theism of fairyland or of a world of dreams, has no meaning or value. To Christianity on the other hand the order of nature is real indeed, but lies, if men but knew it, in the grasp of a higher order of spirit which can mould it to its will. The only hindrance to the revelation of that order and its establishment is the absence of the faith to claim it on the part of man. God's purpose of grace is thus hindered, not by a judicial scheme, such as the *karma* system is, but solely by the moral freedom of the human will. Whatever hinders the co-operation of the grace of God and the penitent heart of man belongs to a lower order, and in proving a hindrance to the emergence of a higher ethical law, the law of *karma*, while itself in its recognition of the penalty of wrong representing a great moral advance, makes it impossible for the Theisms over which it exercises its influence to conceive altogether worthily of God.

[1] Quoted in Ward's *Realm of Ends: Pluralism and Theism*, p. 316.

III

There remains another aspect of the *karma* doctrine which is hostile to Theism. The fact that it has involved India, beyond all other problems, with the question of the deliverance of the fettered soul has done much to thwart the full development of its theistic instincts. The individual self and its fortunes form to it the first reality, with the result that India's spiritualism almost turns back to empiricism. Perhaps we have here the secret of the worldliness of a people who, above all other peoples, have contemned the world. The seers of India have seldom been wholly possessed, as so many of the saints of other lands have been, by the endeavour after God. They cannot escape from themselves sufficiently to give themselves up whole-heartedly to Him. They give themselves up whole-heartedly instead to the endeavour, never accomplished, to escape from themselves. The goal of Theism is union with God. It is more concerned with that attainment and with the blessed fellowship that it promises than with the escape from penalty. Its aim is not merely to make men no longer slaves, but to make them sons of God. In the theistic systems of India God is apt to be looked upon as an accident, while this system of *karma* is, for the individual, the substance of reality. Perhaps this is why India has always presented to us so strange a paradox—a people intensely religious, and yet so half-hearted in their religion. Their whole heart is in the escape, but it is not in the gaining of the goal of a divine fellowship. It is the menacing fact of existence, as they conceive it to lie in the grip of this law, that so lays hold of them as to lift them out of engagement with worldly things and to engross them with questions of deliverance. But the half is the enemy of the whole. We see that the lesson that they have learned so perfectly of the world's evil, the desire to escape from it that has so entered into their souls, only

bears them half of the way towards the goal, and seems to make further advance impossible.

The fundamental difference between the Christian and the Hindu Theisms, from which the differences we have been noting issue, consists in the fact that righteousness which is inseparable from God is normative in the Christian view of man's salvation as it is not in the other. The aim of the Christian gospel is the making of men righteous, and this ethical purpose determines it throughout. The aim of Indian Theism, as of all Indian religion, is deliverance from *saṃsāra*, which need only be secondarily a process of righteousness. God manifests Himself in the Christian revelation 'not as the pitier and pardoner of man in his sin, but as redeemer and saviour of man from his sin'.[1] One can scarcely exagerate the depth to which this difference reaches down. 'By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified', says St. Paul. His end and aim—which is righteousness—he sees, cannot be reached by the way of the endeavour to do duties. He finds, he believes, in Christ another way, which is still as before a way to the great goal of righteousness. The Indian thinkers saw equally that their aim could not be attained by the doing of works—but as their aim was different, the new path that they sought was different likewise. They would say, 'By works, by the fulfilment of *karma* shall no man be delivered from *saṃsāra*'. The Christian goal is a positive and ethical attainment, righteousness; the Indian goal is negative and unethical, escape from the bondage of existence.

Another way of expressing this difference which so deeply divides the Christian and the Hindu Theisms is to say that Christian Theism has a moral ideal before it, while Hindu religion has not. A paramount aim of religion in the Christian view is to summon men to a life of holiness, which is also a life of fellowship with God, and to do so by setting the high pattern of such a life before them. The nearest that the

[1] Du Bose's *Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 102.

Indian Theisms come to such an ethical presentation of the goal of life is in the *Gītā*, and it cannot be denied that the content of its ideal is altogether meagre and uninspiring. The one moral postulate of value that it presents is contained in the formula that works are to be done with no desire for fruit. Noble as that rule is, so far as it goes, it certainly goes only a little way. It is purely negative: it has no positive content of moral beauty and charm to attract the heart. A figure of such meagre outline cannot be described as a moral ideal—nor can the religion that enshrines it be described as in any full sense an ethical religion.

It has been claimed for all the religions by which the *karma* doctrine is accepted that they are more ethical than Christianity and more in agreement with the facts of life when they proclaim the inevitable sequence of punishment upon wrong-doing. It is true, indeed, that the conception of God as one who punishes the evil-doer, and whose law is absolutely impartial and sure is a high and worthy one. The objection to it is just that it is never, to the Indian Theist, fully identified with the will and mind of God, and that it is not fully assimilated into the divine personality. Our claim is that, if that were done, the fact would be realized that the religion that centres about a personal God who is Himself righteousness and love is upon a higher ethical level than the hard retributive system of *karma*. 'Legalists', says Royce, 'do not succeed in reducing the laws they teach to any rational unity.' When law is taken up into the personality of the divine Father, and is controlled by His will of love for ends of righteousness, we have reached the final summit of ethical religion.

And, further, it is only to a superficial understanding that the *karma* law appears more in agreement with the facts of life than is a gospel of immediate and full forgiveness by a God of love and righteousness. It is true that upon him who has had the experience of such forgiveness penalties of his wrong-doing, may, and generally do, continue still to fall in

bodily suffering, in social contempt, in his own remorse and regret. But to him now these penalties are altogether different from that which, without the faith of God's forgiveness, they would have seemed. They are not 'the wages of sin'; they are not the cold wrath of an outraged lawgiver or of a broken law. They are the chastisement of divine wisdom and goodness, manifestations of the divine grace and tenderness, not the expressions of a penal code, but the revelations of a Father's heart. 'God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?'[1] There is in the penitent's experience between his sufferings and those of one who does not see behind them the love of a forgiving God all the difference that there is between hell and heaven. 'How diverse are these straits from those of hell'; how diverse is this chastisement from that of a cold law of *karma*.

Thus it appears that Indian Theism was inevitably thwarted in its development by the *karma* doctrine, which, whatever its origin, has its root deep in natural religion, and is irreconcilable with the free working of redemptive love. The whole Indian development is, as a matter of fact, so dominated by it that its religion is never much more than an adjunct of that overwhelming view of life and its destiny. There is a striking comparison made use of in another connexion by the late Professor William James which serves admirably to describe the course of Indian religious history. Adopting it we may say that the *karma*-transmigration doctrine lies in the midst of the efforts of the Indian soul to formulate a theory of the universe 'like a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it. In one you may find a man writing an atheistic volume; in the next some one on his knees praying for faith and strength.' In another 'a system of idealistic metaphysics is being excogitated. . . . They all own the corridor and all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into one of their respective rooms.' Whatever the

[1] Hebrews xii. 7.

type of religion we find at any time predominant in the Indian development, it never threatens the supremacy of this deep-rooted view of human life and its meaning. They are always subsidiary to it and take their colour from it. There is a somewhat cynical proverb among the Marāṭhas, and, no doubt, among other Indian peoples as well, which may be applied to this doctrine in its relation to other views, such as that of Theism, which seek to find a place beside it. 'If the rope of the God above gets broken', they say, 'the gods below will bellow.' The efforts of the gods of Theism so long as the god of *karma* rules above them are poor, futile things, and all they can do is to 'bellow' in helpless agreement with what the higher power ordains. Such a law of necessity could not be re-interpreted as a moral law of freedom, and the supreme power in the universe could not but be conceived, so long as this law was acknowledged, as a fate and not as a gracious Father. The highest person in this system is not a God who can be worshipped and who redeems; it is the emancipated soul himself. Just as in the kindred Orphic doctrine the goal to which all endeavour strives is nothing less than the soul's own divinity, so in fact it is here also. The end almost inevitably sought by one who is so engrossed in stripping off the chains of selfhood is, however that end may be concealed, the very apotheosis of the self. This attitude, as has been pointed out by a student of Mysticism, is that of those chiefly 'by whom Reality is apprehended as a state or a place rather than a person: and who have adopted, in describing the earlier stages of their journey to God, such symbols as those of rebirth or transmigration'.[1] Everything is hostile in such an atmosphere to the production of a satisfying Theism. The god who is the spectator of those processes of *saṃsāra* is a remote deity whose relation to the world, as in the case of Plotinus no less than of Rāmānuja, is accidental and inexplicable; or he is one of several minor beings who, as Proclus describes them, 'appear changing often from one form to

[1] Underhill's *Mysticism*, p. 501.

another', shadowy and impersonal. The only personality that matters is that of the fettered soul, and to him his personal existence is the very bond he seeks to break. If personal life is thought of as itself a burden, how can it be predicated worthily of God? Not unless the bondage of this self-centred doctrine were cast off, and unless full scope were possible for the gracious moral purposes of God as He wins men to His fellowship, could Theism come to its own in India. The way of its true development is by the increasing enrichment of the individual soul as its spiritual nature is more and more discovered in relationship of love with others, and in fellowship with God. The more it forgets itself in love, the more it discovers God. But in a world fettered by *saṃsāra* there is no room for God at all.

IV

But there are other aspects of Indian Theology, besides the aspect that is given to it by this ancient belief, which have proved hostile to the development of Theism to its full fruition. One of these is its excessive intellectualism. It is true, as we have seen in our study of the various *bhakti* worships, that some of these seem far enough from such a danger. Not infrequently the vice of these cults has been, not that they have obeyed reason too exclusively, but that they have cast off all its restraints. The opposite extreme from intellectualism of an unbridled emotionalism is to be found characterizing not a few of the theistic worships that have arisen in India. But perhaps this was due in part to revolt from the exaltation of knowledge to an opposite extreme, and had as one of its causes the very bias towards an arid intellectualism which is so characteristic of India. Certainly it is the case that Indian thought has almost always in its quest for final truth taken it for granted that whatever was not of pure intellect was gross and unworthy of the Highest. The way to God is a way to an atmosphere ever growing rarer, to

a region that only pure knowledge can attain. It is a way of continual abstraction until that One is reached which is so abstract as to be universal. Such a method is hostile to Theism, for Theism implies fellowship, and there is no fellowship between the knower and his knowledge.

One result of intellectualism in religion is that its range is limited to a select company of those who can appreciate it. It is aristocratic in its character. But we affirm that a true Theism is essentially democratic. It postulates a personal God who desires to have men's fellowship. It postulates a universal element in man which is the means of such a fellowship. Christianity claims uncompromisingly that the highest is not beyond the most degraded of men. . Indian Theism with its inability to rid itself completely, save in rare instances, of the distinctions of caste is for the most part aristocratic because it is intellectual. It requires an effort for the *Bhagavadgītā* to admit that the way to deliverance is open even to Śūdras and to women. While Rāmānuja and other exponents of the theology of *bhakti* have sought to open the gate wider than this bias of the Indian spirit naturally would permit, they have not been wholly successful. Rāmānuja defines *bhakti* as 'only a particular kind of knowledge of which one is infinitely fond and which leads to the extinction of all other interests and desires'.[1] In Rāmānuja's system, and in the *Gītā*, we may say that, while ethical and spiritual ideas have been imported into this conception of the knowledge that brings release, the intellectual element is still predominant and determinative. Their religion still, like the religion of the Upaniṣads, while it is a Theism, is a Gnosticism, a speculation, making its primary appeal to the logical understanding. It is something that, unlike Christianity, is rather revealed to the wise and prudent than to babes.

In so far as Indian religious thought is governed by this intellectual and aristocratic bias, the development from it of

[1] *Ved. Saṃg.*, p. 146; quoted by Sukhtankar, p. 71.

a fully ethical Theism cannot but be hampered. Just as the Greeks 'never ceased to look upon knowledge as the essence of the life of the spirit',[1] so also did and do the Hindus. Most of their thinkers would agree with Plutarch that by means of philosophic thought alone 'a faint hint' of a share in the life of God can be obtained by the souls of men; in no other way can it be obtained at all. The broad moral path, the path that is open to every man of good will, however humble, is the only path by which Theism can advance from strength to strength. Where the aim is a fellowship of persons, the means to its accomplishment must be those in which not the intellect alone but the whole inner life is employed. That is the same as to say that a full-grown Theism, such as Christianity is, should be fundamentally ethical. The aim of Hindu thought on the other hand is primarily ontological; what inspires it is not so much the longing for more love or righteousness as the longing for more of the essential and the eternal. It prefers the pale and spectral as something higher and more enduring than the morally concrete. The Hindu view, like the Greek, apprehends the world under the contrast of the spiritual and the material, the Christian view under that of moral good and evil. 'In the former evil has its root in matter, in the latter in voluntary guilt.'[2] The words *māyā* and *avidyā* are too deeply engrained in an intellectual view of God and of man's relation to Him for the theistic instincts of India to be able ever completely to transform them. Whether the fully developed doctrine of Śaṅkara can claim to be the true Vedanta may be doubtful, but by their incurable ontological aim the Upaniṣads certainly pointed in the direction of such a solution. The result is that the ideal set before itself even by the *Gītā* is that of detachment from the world rather than that of the transformation of the world by the power of good. Nothing in the Indian view of the universe has proved more fatal to the development of a serious Theism than this. The doctrine of *karma* is an

[1] Eucken's *Problem of Human Life* (Eng. trans.), p. 99.
[2] Eucken, op. cit., p. 195.

enemy thwarting it, as it were, from without, a view of man's life which, whatever its origin and however completely accepted by India, yet is not part of the Indian spirit, but has been imposed upon it by influences that are beyond our sight. The intellectualism and unethical character of Hindu thought is, on the contrary, an enemy of Theism from within. This characteristic seems to be of the very fibre of the Indian nature, giving it a bias towards metaphysics, towards pantheism in religion, towards asceticism in life. For we cannot but agree in large measure with Schleiermacher that whether a man represents the Infinite Being as personal or impersonal depends on whether his tendency is towards a voluntaristic or an intellectual view of things. 'Acosmism, the doctrine that there is no world', as Professor Ward has pointed out, 'has been the usual outcome of so-called pure thought.'[1]

The idea of a personal God is certainly a postulate of practical reason, whatever else it is besides. In the measure in which our thought is moralized God becomes more real and draws more near to us. 'Conviction here can only come by living, not by merely thinking.'[2] 'If any man willeth to do God's will', says Jesus, 'he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God.'[3]

> O only source of all our light and life,
> Whom as our truth, our strength, we see and feel,
> But whom the hours of mortal, moral strife
> Alone aright reveal.

The sense that this is so seems at times to be dawning upon the spirit of the Indian theist. He can express it negatively and declare that 'not by the Vedas, nor by understanding, nor by much learning can the Self be gained'.[4] He recognizes the need of the child-spirit (*bālya*) for the attainment of true *vidyā*.[5] But his attitude is still, as the intellectualist's is,

[1] Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 423.
[2] Op. cit., p. 423.
[3] John vii. 17.
[4] *Kāṭh. Up.* I. 2, 23.
[5] *Bṛi. Up.* III. 5, and *Rāmānuja*, Sukhtankar, p. 74.

passive, not active; his religion is a matter 'of eyes, not wings'. Truth is for him an 'inert, static relation'. He has not perceived that for the knowledge of God there is necessary the will doing His will, that His revelation is most of all made known to men in 'hours of mortal, moral strife'.

The prevailing passivity of the Indian ideal of life is a consequence of its intellectual and unethical character. Indian mysticism for this reason is guilty of what students of this subject consider *par excellence* the mystic vice, the 'deceitful repose' of quietism. 'This tranquillity', says one great Western mystic, 'is forgetfulness of God, one's self and one's neighbour.' 'The true condition of quiet, according to the great mystics . . . is the free and constantly renewed self-giving and self-emptying of a burning love.' 'The whole moral and spiritual creature expands and rests, yes, but this very rest is produced by action, unperceived because so fleet, so near, so all-fulfilling.'[1] It has been pointed out as a virtue of the *karma* concept that it excludes 'salvation by works'.[2] The whole Indian view of life is, indeed, hostile to the attribution of spiritual worth to action that has its root in selfishness. Thus far its tendency is ethically sound. There is a deep root of truth in it, but the plant that springs from that root has been stunted and rendered unfruitful by the thin atmosphere of intellectualism in which it grows. Indian thought has not perceived the distinction that Christian mystics make between action and activity, between 'the deep and vital movement of the whole self too deeply absorbed for self-consciousness' and 'its fussy surface energies'.[3] It was right to set itself against the wearying and futile activities of selfish 'attachment to fruit'. But just because it had no rich and constraining thought of a personal God winning the heart of man unto Himself, it failed to rise to the conception of a *karma* by which we 'work out our own salvation', resting in the appropriated strength of One who is 'working in

[1] See Underhill's *Mysticism*, pp. 385, 386.
[2] Hogg's *Karma and Redemption*.
[3] Underhill's *Mysticism*, p. 388.

us to will and to do of His good pleasure'.[1] The effect of such striving, which is none the less the soul's own because informed and upheld by the energy of God, is a 'joy unsevered from tranquillity', the very opposite of the despair that is the inevitable accompaniment of a listless contemplation. The intellectualism of the Indian spirit and its resultant pessimism are perhaps the most deeply hostile of all forces in the land to the development of such an ethical Theism as Christianity is, a religion of hope, a 'gospel of salvation by joy'. It is only when the constraints of reason are cast altogether to the winds that Theism lays any powerful grasp upon the life of India, and when that is the case the revolt from intellectualism is only too complete.

V

The failure of the erotic Theism that gathers about the name especially of Kṛiṣṇa is certainly not due to its excessive intellectualism. The more thoughtful worship, on the other hand, which is associated with Rāma is a more deliberate rejection of reason as agnostic, and so for religious purposes unsatisfying in favour of what may be less exalted, but at least 'lays hold of the heart'.[2] In both instances the resultant religion is predominantly emotional, and for that reason genuinely personal and theistic. It is indeed of the essence of Theism and of *bhakti* that it should appeal to the heart of man and move his will. There must be a fellowship in personal life, in love and trust, if Theism is to come to its fruition. That must in all its fullness be admitted. But while this is so, and while it is in the 'loving faith' of the worshipper at the 'lotus feet' of Kṛiṣṇa and other personal gods of whom the heart of the Indian worshipper has laid hold that the stream of Indian Theism runs most full and strong, yet here there is a danger against which these cults have failed to guard themselves. There is far greater hope indeed of the blossoming of

[1] Philippians ii. 13. [2] Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyaṇa*.

a genuinely theistic faith in the atmosphere of the fervent devotion of the *bhakti* cults than in the chill air of Upaniṣad speculation. But the whole history of human love warns us how hard it is to preserve it secure from sensuous passion. Feeling, in comparison with the sluggish reason, is a powerful moral dynamic, and as such it must have a great place in an ethical Theism, but on that very account its rule is encompassed by grave perils against which it is necessary to guard. 'Religion', in the words of Professor Howison, 'is emotion touched with morality, and at that wondrous touch not merely ennobled but raised from the dead—uplifted from the grave of sense into the life eternal of reason.'[1] The question of supreme importance for every such emotional religion is what touch is thus to ennoble it, what creative moral power is thus to raise it from the grave of sense and give it steadfastness and strength.

The most crucial test of any religion is concerned with its ethical character. Is it, or is it not, an instrument for producing righteousness? In the last resort the supreme religion is that which bears fruit most richly in conduct and in life. It is that which demands and makes possible the highest standard of goodness. In it the various motives that impel and induce to holiness will be so adjusted and so strengthened as to produce in him over whom the religion has control the maximum of effect. In seeking this end theistic faiths unanimously recognize the importance of the enlistment of the emotions and affections on the side of righteousness. The very fact that a religion is a Theism, with a personal God at its centre, appears to involve this recognition. To be a person is to be a source from which moral activity radiates, and to which such activity is directed. To be a person implies loving and being loved. If this be so, then a Theism is bound to be—whatever else it is as well—an emotional religion. The very name *bhakti* implies that this is true of all these Indian Theisms in which this sentiment has a place. They are religions in

[1] Howison, *The Conception of God*, p. 113.

which 'loving faith' issues from the heart of the worshipper towards the object of his worship. And almost necessarily there is to be found corresponding to this devout emotion on the part of the *bhakta* a conception of divine grace flowing downwards from the divine heart. Devotion on man's part and grace on God's are two complementary aspects of theistic religion viewed upon the side of emotion. They are means to the production of a moral elevation in the worshipper, and may be considered from that point of view apart altogether from the further question whether the emotions that they awaken are grounded upon reality or not.

It is true, as has been seen, that large tracts of Indian Theism are 'sicklied o'er' with intellectualism. A type of religion which views 'knowledge' as the highest means to the attainment of its purpose is to be found strongly established among the theistic doctrines of India, and of the effect of such a mood upon the religion in which it is present we shall have to treat later. Alternating, however, with these intellectual Theisms there are to be found in India, as a review of the history has disclosed, cults in which feeling is central. Of these it has to be fully recognized that they are true to the spirit of theistic religion in magnifying its appeal to the human heart. Without that appeal and without elements in it that can win and constrain the affections there can be no religion in any sense in which Theism can understand that word. To claim that where God is there must be faith on the part of His worshipper, to emphasize the inward and experimental aspects of religion, to endeavour to capture the passion of the heart for God—these tasks are involved in the nature of Theism, and to these it summons its adherents whenever the religion they profess is a vital force within them. Caitanya's ecstasy certainly, in so far as it implied an intimate entrance into the sense of the divine fellowship, was of the very stuff of theistic religion, and to that extent is a testimony to the reality and power of Caitanya's faith. The *kīrtans* of the Kṛiṣṇa-worshipper, the hymns of adoration of the Śaivite saint—these, as evidence of

an experience of joy and peace, fitly support the claims of the cults which inspire them to obtain a place among theistic religions. Immediacy is a characteristic of Theism, and it expresses itself in these outbursts of emotion with a genuineness that there is no disputing.

But, while this is so, we have to remember that this emotional energy, in the highest order of Theism, must be a means to an ethical end. The whole strange history of the emotional *bhakti* cults is a testimony to the perils that beset religious passion, when it is awakened, but is not controlled. It is a testimony to the fact that such emotion while the best of servants is the most dangerous of masters. What 'the gods approve' is certainly not merely 'the tumult of the soul'. Everything, in judging of the religion in which the winds of emotion have been let loose, depends upon the power that governs them and the directions in which, under that government, they bear the human spirit. Feeling can fill the sails of the spirit in its course, but it cannot map out that course and guide the spirit to its goal. It supplies energy, not insight. A religion which looks to the emotions it awakens in its followers to supply the reason for their own existence has no guarantee that its course may not be directed to hell as likely as to heaven. If the God of their worship is largely a reflex of the religious feelings of the worshippers then that religion is necessarily doomed to barrenness and futility. It will be a force as fugitive as the emotions upon which it builds. It is not surprising, therefore, to find for how brief a period most of the emotional cults of India have endured.

Of course, there is none of the Indian Theisms, however emotional in its character, which has not in it already some nucleus of ideas around which the emotions gather. There is always an historical or quasi-historical datum, represented by a personal name Kṛiṣṇa or Śiva which furnishes to a greater or less extent the stimulus of feeling. But in the riot of emotions that gather round that centre the boundaries of the

subjective and the objective are soon obliterated. Kṛiṣṇa to Caitanya, Śiva to Māṇikka-vāśagar is as much the creature of his rapture as its creator. Where this is the case there is, we repeat, no guarantee as to the kind—whether evil or good—of the conduct and character which the emotion will produce. The original impulse may have been given by the idea which the God as an historical or mythical person embodies, but presently we perceive that feeling has set off on a path of its own making to a strange and, it may be, a sinister goal. There is no steadfastness of direction and no guarantee of persistence in a religion directed to what has been called 'an emotionally irradiated mental void'. It is destined inevitably to futility and to waywardness. The idea that the emotion can actually create the objective reality towards which it is supposed to be directed is indicated, for example, in the popular proverb, 'Where faith (*bhāva*) is, there God is'. If this were true, then the heart could fashion its God after its own desire, and would worship the object of its own longings, mingled more largely of evil than of good. Hence the sensuousness of so many of the undisciplined worships that we have reviewed. If it is the strength of the passion and not its purity that gives it worth, then why should not Rādhā stand by the side of Kṛiṣṇa as the object of men's worship, and why not even other nearer and more appreciable objects of their love such as the washerwoman of the Bengali poet Caṇḍīdās?

We have already referred to the fact that no concrete and complete moral ideal rises before the adherents of the Indian theistic systems. They contain, it is true, some notable ethical suggestions; they present valuable rules of conduct; but nowhere is there to be found a fully fashioned ideal of goodness. When we consider these systems further in their aspects as religions of feeling we find the same lack, but here it is something more than a moral ideal that is required, and that is not presented to the worshipper. What is needed at the centre of a religion of feeling is an ideal realized in

a person, presented in a life that wins the heart. We have seen that *bhakti* in many of the usages of the word implies a relation of loyalty such as that between a king and his subjects, or between a wife and her husband. Loyalty is certainly, as Professor Royce has shown, 'a principle fit to be made the basis of an universal moral code'.[1] The spirit of true loyalty is of its very essence a complete synthesis of the moral and of the religious interests.'[2] So far the *bhakti* doctrines are on the high road towards a fully ethical religion. If they do not travel far on that road, and in some cases soon desert it for devious by-paths, the reason is that the ultimate value of such a religion depends altogether in the object of this loyalty. Surely it is obviously untrue to claim, as Andrew Lang has done, in reference to the history of Scotland and the religion of its people—

> It little skills what faith men vaunt,
> If loyal men they be,
> To Christ's ain Kirk and Covenant,
> Or the king across the sea.

It is true, that in the case of any cause, even if it be a bad cause, or of any love, even if it be the love of one who is unworthy, when that cause and that affection awaken loyalty, the religious spirit, the free self-surrender that they evoke, are infinitely precious. This self-surrender is richly present in the Indian Theisms, in those that are more sensuous no less than in those that are spiritual. They have in them deep wells of feeling which to that extent may rightly be called religious. Of that there is no doubt. But at the same time the quality of the religion must be judged of by the object which inspires the self-surrender and the love, for, according as it is, so shall be the resulting character of the worshipper. There is honour and loyalty among thieves, but it is not the same order of honour as that which there is among saints. It certainly mattered infinitely to Scotland that the loyalty

[1] Royce's *Sources of Religious Insight*, p. 203. [2] Op. cit., p. 206.

of her clans passed from being devotion to a cattle-lifting chief to become devotion to Christ and all the noble causes that His name implies. We are inevitably moulded by that to which our hearts go forth in love and adoration.

The great mystics of the West have found in Jesus Christ this creative and controlling force, the means by which what is apt to be 'a blind and egoistic rapture' is transformed into a 'fruitful and self-forgetting love'.[1] By His life, as the realization of the moral ideal, His followers' lives are guided and controlled, for not only does the love of Christ constrain His lovers, but His example guides them, and His message governs them. Christ is at once the inspiration of the Christian's faith and the normative influence that controls his life. His personal example of transcendent purity and the summons to self-sacrifice for others which His whole life proclaims form for His followers a two-fold safeguard against an enfeebling emotionalism on the one hand, and against inconstant impulse on the other. It seems to the Christian that in Christ Jesus the ideas of law and of freedom are reconciled. He presents a moral ideal that cannot be transcended, and at the same time the deep motives of love and gratitude that His life and message call into play within the Christian's heart make the endeavour to attain that ideal a glad and willing labour. The personal motive, 'for my sake', engages the whole energy of the heart of him who has been laid hold of by the love of Christ, while the clear outlines of His high example preserve him from vague and ill-directed effort. The whole strength of the emotions is turned towards the love of this great Lover while at the same time the waywardness of passion is restrained. There must be a human face looking forth from the dark Abyss of the Unconditioned, else there can be no worship, and no fellowship of love: and that face must be that of one who is the 'first and only fair', the very embodiment of our supreme ideal, else men shall follow the devices of their own hearts. The presentation of the goal

[1] Underhill's *Mysticism*, p. 125.

of man's salvation as 'being with Christ' had the necessary consequence of separating it from all self-gratification. Largely as emotion enters into the Christian motive, it is always preserved from that selfishness which in emotional religions like the *bhakti* faiths is apt to look forward to the end as only the attainment of peace,[1] by the character of the life of Him who awakens the emotion. Fellowship with Christ can never be interpreted as implying a 'moral holiday'. It is identification with the highest good, fellowship with the God whose will is sacrifice and service. It is the historical Person at its centre that preserves Christianity from the perils of a selfish emotion. For that reason the greatest contemplatives of the West—Suso and Teresa, for example—found 'that deliberate meditation upon the humanity of Christ . . . was a necessity if they were to retain a healthy and well-balanced inner life'.[2]

The concrete realization of the moral ideal in the life of Jesus is, it surely may be claimed without dispute, a far nobler one, and one far worthier to be at the centre of an ethical system than that which is presented in the lives of Kṛiṣṇa and of Rāma. That is His place by right; they can only be fitted for it by the manipulation of their legends by their worshippers for ethical ends. They are hampered by the gross superstitions out of which they have grown, and from which the moral sense of their adherents is striving with imperfect success to refine them. It may be said of them, as M. Cumont has said of Mithraism, that they are involved in a 'questionable alliance' with orgiastic cults, and 'are obliged to drag behind them all the weight of a chimerical and hateful past'. Behind the figure of Kṛiṣṇa, however allegorized or interpreted, there leers or, as in chapter xi of the *Gītā*, lowers the pagan figure of a gross nature deity. Christianity is not thus

[1] 'Tukārām's end was individual, the peace and solace and beatific rest of his own restless soul.' (Professor Patwardhan in *Indian Interpreter*, vii, p. 29.)
[2] Underhill's *Mysticism*, p. 144.

burdened. Christ, we may say, using the words not in their theological, but in their ethical meaning, is a descent from above, not a growth from beneath. He does not need to be refined by man's ethical sense. On the contrary, it is He that refines and enlightens it. It may, however, be maintained that no such manifested personal life is needed at the centre of the highest type of theistic worship, that no such realized moral ideal is demanded at the heart of an ethical religion. The testimony to human nature and to human need that the whole record of Indian Theism bears is opposed to that claim. Kṛiṣṇaism and Rāmaism and Śiva Bhakti, and every religion that has made an effective appeal by means of the grace and condescension of God, every religion which bids men love because God first loved them, must necessarily have at its centre a tale of divine love, saving, condescending, sacrificing. They all agree with Christianity to this extent at least that they seek for a vision that, in the words of Aristotle, will 'move them as the object of their love'. But presently they will want to be sure that their vision is real. Men, as their intelligence advances, become unable to remain content with a tale that they are not certain is true. It must be an historical manifestation of the divine life. Men cannot be content with a legend which, however fair, is unbelievable; they cannot be content with Viṣṇu's three steps or Śiva's blue throat, with Kṛiṣṇa or with Rāma. If truth is 'embodied in a tale' that it may enter man's heart and win it, it must be a true tale that will stand every scrutiny of history as well as fulfil every demand of practical reason. It has been pointed out again and again that one reason why Christianity triumphed over so pure and so deeply philosophic a doctrine as Neoplatonism was just because it possessed Jesus Christ. So also the great weakness of Mithraism, we are told, in its conflict with Christianity lay in this, that 'in place of a divine life instinct with human sympathy, it had only to offer the symbolism of a cosmic legend'.[1] 'Nothing', says Martineau,

[1] Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Aurelius*, p. 622.

'is so sickly, so paralytic, as "Moral Ideals" that are nothing else. . . . They cannot will or act or love; and their whole power is in abeyance till they present themselves in a living, personal being, who secures the righteousness of the universe and seeks the sanctification of each heart.'[1]

Perhaps the most influential of all those elements that enable both the Indian Theisms and Christian Theism to make a great emotional appeal is the teaching which they contain in regard to the grace of God. Almost all of them present some picture of the divine magnanimity and condescension in relation to man's sin and need which touches the heart, and constrains to loving service and obedience. The attractiveness of the presentation of the Bāl Kṛiṣṇa or even of the god sporting with the shepherdesses lay in its suggestion of his condescension to men in thus coming to their side and sharing their joys. So with the much more noble idea of the black-throated Śiva, as expressed by Māṇikka-vāśagar:

> Thou mad'st me
> Thine: didst fiery poison eat, pitying poor souls,
> That I might thine ambrosia taste—I, meanest one.

These are thoughts of God's grace that cannot but, once they are believed, have an influence in creating in the heart a response of love and of surrender.

But here, again, it is inevitable that a question shall presently arise in the mind of any thoughtful worshipper as to the authenticity of these tales of the divine graciousness. Myth has its place in the early stages of a religion as the form in which ideas naturally present themselves to the mind of the childhood of the race. And when the myth is seen later to be a myth the idea it embodies may still, of course, be retained as true. The husk may be cast away, and the kernel truth of the grace of God may still remain. But as a matter of fact in the creation of a deep and true emotion it is just the concrete and not the abstract that appeals. Ideas,

[1] *Selections from the Literature of Theism* (Caldecott and Mackintosh), p. 401.

however noble, are not sufficient to stir and govern the heart. It is the vivid fact of Śiva's throat blue with poison that he drank for men, it is the thought of the actual groves of Vṛindāvana through which Kṛiṣṇa went in gracious company with men and women—it is these actual and concrete things that make real the grace of the god, so that they move the springs of emotion and constrain the affections of men and women. If these things as facts of the past disappear, the ideas at the same time lose their moving and compelling power. There is not in ideas alone the vital and vitalizing energy which there is in the same ideas when exhibited as personal centres of loving activity, as divinely operative on the human level, furnishing an impulse that bears men onwards and upwards to God. Christian Theism claims to possess in Jesus Christ such a personal centre and source of power, and that by every historical test His story is proved to be authentic and true. He bore our sins and carried our sorrows: in all our afflictions He was afflicted. By His partnership in our humanity, by the love of His lowly life, and of His sufferings and death, He draws the hearts of men unto Himself. He is the manifested grace of God; and this grace is not only a beautiful and winning idea, but a fact of history that to every test proves itself true.

When we go on further to ask what the purpose and effect of the divine grace in Indian and Christian Theism actually is, we find here also a significant difference. The difference lies in this that the Indian Theisms, as has been already pointed out, are imperfectly ethicized, and do not keep always before them a lofty moral ideal or aim primarily at ethical results. In every Theism of a high order the problem must emerge of reconciling its ethical interests, which are paramount, with a conception of God's gracious character which will be worthy of a God who is love. These two principles, which are superficially inconsistent, have to be reconciled so that neither the moral interests of man nor the character of God shall suffer. It does not appear that this reconciliation

is effected satisfactorily in the Indian Theisms. Ethical interests are sacrificed. We see this at its extreme in the claim that a single utterance of the name of the god can save from the most heinous sins. The only way in which a doctrine of the divine grace or a tale of the divine condescension in coming down to save can be reconciled with the demands of a religion which is primarily ethical is that the divine deliverer must be Himself the ideal of holiness, and this method of salvation all compact of righteousness. He will, in all His acts of grace, seek first the salvation of man, in the sense not merely of release from bondage or punishment, but in the sense of the winning of his heart for holiness. But this is not what is kept ever in view in the Hindu Theisms. The God of grace is not equally manifested as a God of righteousness. His relation to the rule of *karma* is not such that the rival claims of the two principles here suggested are reconciled. The grace of God cuts across the rule of *karma* in a manner that makes its operation no more than an occasional, and not fully explained, exception. We are not shown a view of God as a God of grace which transcends morally, and takes up into itself, with no sacrifice of moral ends, the operation of the God of *karma*.

The Christian religion is fundamentally a religion of grace, and God, as manifested in Christ, is supremely a God of grace and of forgiveness. The love and death of Christ form God's special manifestation of Himself in this aspect, and constrain the hearts of men with an unequalled power to the grateful service of Him of whom they can say 'He loved me and gave Himself for me'. And the love and death of Christ are not only invincibly constraining to the heart, but they are also through and through ethical in their meaning and purpose. What theory one may propound of the meaning of that death, and of the way in which it makes possible the forgiveness of sins, is comparatively immaterial. What is material is that there the evil of sin is exhibited in all its hatefulness, and that the divine grace can only be apprehended where sin is abhorred

and rejected. Sin is not forgiven or deliverance granted as a mere indulgence. The way to the possibility of forgiveness in a God of righteousness is a way of divine sorrow and pain, a way than which none could witness more worthily to the claims of the moral law than does the way of the Cross. The penitent casting himself in faith and gratitude upon such a Saviour is compelled by all the energies of his nature—heart and will and reason—to choose and follow goodness. Thus the claims at once of grace and righteousness are here reconciled, and the process of redemption is through and through fashioned from stuff of the conscience. But grace is more than this divine condescension revealed in the Cross of Christ. It is further a supernatural gift of spiritual power. With this gift God follows His child reinforcing his will, strengthening his desires after good, 'besetting him behind and before' in life's temptations, bringing to him continual comfort and help.

Jesus Christ in His person and in His life fulfils those cravings which gathered about the names of Kṛiṣṇa and of Rāma, and which laboured to idealize these not altogether ideal figures. His message of the Kingdom of God, a transformed world-order, eternally ready on the part of God, but requiring for its realization among men the appeal on their part of faith, is at once a great summons to man to trust Him and a great call to man to put into practice now the laws of social service and of love which are the laws of this spiritual Kingdom. 'Mysticism, whether in the great religions of the East or in Christendom, offers to redeem man from the world; but, as Kaftan has well said, it is the distinctive feature of the original Christian gospel that, while redeeming man from the world, it does so only in order to bind him to a more unreserved service of God in the world.'[1] Christ's revelation shows to us a divine Father who is solely hindered in the establishment of His kingdom of love and righteousness by the unbelief and selfishness of men. His own life by its complete surrender to the divine will, by its service of men to the uttermost point

[1] Hogg's *Christ's Message of the Kingdom*, p. 119.

of love and sacrifice that thereby He might redeem them and open their hearts to faith and the response of love, is in itself the supreme example of what the Kingdom He proclaims is and shall be. Love to God, whom Christ exhibits in all His graciousness as the loving and the holy Father, and love to our neighbour, or, as He defines the word, to every one who needs our help—upon these two poles this religion turns. It is at once intensely individual, and yet at the same time universal in its scope. It makes its appeal direct to the heart and to all the powers of its affections, and yet it makes no selfish appeal such as the emotional cults that have sprung up elsewhere in answer to human craving are so often apt to make. The 'supreme peace', the 'everlasting region',[1] to which Kṛiṣṇa brings his worshippers is no Kingdom of God, no realm of the service of love in righteousness, but a self-regarding state of personal purification and endowment. It is not, as the Kingdom of Heaven is, a kingdom of moral ends, in which all private and selfish interests are for ever abolished. When it suggests, as so often Indian visions of the emancipated state suggest, that our centre of selfhood shall vanish into God's it dissolves in cloudland, for the only eternal city of God is that where 'His servants shall serve Him',[2] built up as it must be upon the solely abiding foundations of duty and of responsibility.

VI

There are other aspects of these Indian experiments in religion which indicate at once the demands to which Theism is a response and the inadequacy of the means by which the attempt is made to satisfy these demands. There is, for example, the longing for communion with God, a longing which expresses itself in every religion which maintains its faith in a personal God. The sacramental feasts and 'mysteries' that have a place in so many non-Christian cults, as

[1] *Gītā*, 18. 62. [2] Revelation xxii. 3.

they have within Christianity itself, testify to this imperious desire, and to the longing likewise for escape from the tyranny of the world of sense to a world of spirit. These have not so prominent a place in the Indian theistic cults as they have had in the Oriental 'mystery religions' which exercised so great an influence at the beginning of the Christian era, but they are found in such a sect as that of the Kabīr Panthīs. The same instinct expresses itself powerfully in another fashion in some of the Kṛiṣṇa cults. In these the worshipper seeks in other ways to assimilate himself to the deity of his devotion. The devotee, in taking the appearance of a woman that he may be the Rādhā of Kṛiṣṇa's love, is bearing testimony in a manner that is crude and unspiritual enough to the need of the heart for the divine fellowship. He is saying with Augustine, 'Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee'. But it needs no argument to demonstrate that the transports of Caitanya could hardly lift him to a high spiritual region or bring him into fellowship with a God of holy love. These cults have their roots too deep in the gross and sensual life, and there is no power in Kṛiṣṇa, or even in Rāma, to purify and exalt them. The suggestions amongst which they move are more likely to rouse the feelings than to chasten them. They proclaim a need, but they have no power to satisfy it.

The Christian sacraments are symbols so simple, so free from grossness, that their spiritual meaning and purpose shine through them undistorted. They are, indeed, an acknowledgement that man still belongs to the realm of time and sense, that he has not yet put off from him his earthly dress, but that he belongs at the same time in a deeper and fuller sense to the realm of the spiritual and the eternal. By these sacraments purity of heart and love are declared to be the means of fellowship with God. The character of this love is determined by the whole tone and spirit of the Christian gospel. The cross of Christ, His giving of His life a ransom for many, His identification of Himself with sinful men, His

endurance of all the brunt of their unreasoning hate, the testimony borne by Him through it all to love and holiness—these things make the emotion which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper symbolizes as pure, as spiritual, as free from grossness, as anything within the heart of man can be. In the fact that the death of Christ is the centre of Christianity we have the guarantee that this Theism is as high and as uplifting, that the bonds by which it binds men are as ethically enduring, as it is possible for the human mind and heart to conceive. As far as that event is in moral and spiritual significance and in its power to constrain the heart above the legends of Kṛiṣṇa, of Rāma, and of Śiva, by so much the Christian religion is raised above them in the hierarchy of Theisms, and is able to claim a greater authority over men's lives and to exercise a greater power to satisfy their desires.

If Theism is the final and absolute form of religion, we must have the assurance that God and man can be fully reconciled and made one in a fellowship which is love and peace. For that assurance it seems necessary that the eternal should be manifested in time, overcoming the hostility of sin and this earthly order, and exhibiting this reconciliation. Such a demonstration in history and such an experience in his own life can alone liberate man for new beginnings and create in him new powers. The idea that God may be willing to accomplish this end is not enough if it remain only an idea; the symbol of Śiva's blue throat cannot suffice. Inevitably, if there be no historical core to this conviction it will fail to hold men permanently or to strengthen them for action. It would leave religion, as it has so largely been in India, no more than a view of the world. Hope and unwearying activity can be built up only on a sure foundation of work accomplished in the midst of time by the very God of grace Himself. 'God so loved the world' that He gave—in time—His Son: that manifestation of the divine heart brings God near to man in grace and man to God in 'loving faith'. For that reason the Theism which has this accredited fact at its centre, and in

which the fact renews itself as a present experience of divine power in the hearts of men, is assured of a place of primacy among all the faiths that seek to bring together God and man, and to establish the Kingdom of heaven which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead, by its demonstration of the supremacy of spiritual things over the tyrannous powers of nature that seem to hold man always in their grasp, gives the assurance that by the same means others too may overcome. 'Through death and resurrection He created in His disciples, and is still creating in others, the kind of faith that opens to them the Kingdom, and makes available to them that absolute forgiveness and that free redemption from punishment, from sin, and from every kind of bondage . . . which are the privileges of the Kingdom.'[1]

A result of the historical character of the Christian religion and of its strong conviction of moral distinctions is that the easy tolerance that is so characteristic of so many of the Indian cults is not possible to it. It has been said of Neoplatonism that it 'lacked the power of exclusiveness, and of that lack it died'.[2] These Indian cults had the same lack and for the same reason. The intellect cannot be as stringent as the conscience, its convictions are not life or death to it as are the other's. And further, an idea, a truth that is only a symbol, has not the same fixity and determination as that which rests upon an historical basis. Such a religion as Christianity is necessarily exclusive. It points to what, it is sure, is the highest good. It reveals One, who, it is sure, is the one true God.

The impotence of Indian Theism can be measured by its failure to solve three problems that have faced it throughout all its history. It could not purge even its own temple courts of polytheism, nor yet of idolatry. It could slacken only for a little, it could not break, the bonds of caste. There can be

[1] Hogg, *Christ's Message of the Kingdom*, p. 184.
[2] Harnack, *Hibbert Journal*, x. p. 81.

no confidence in the world as a cosmos, and as the seat of a divine government, when Rāma shares the supremacy with Śiva, or even hardly wins it in a conflict of physical force with the demon Rāvaṇa. And so long as an idol has its place in the theistic temple—and what temple in India is without one?—the worship cannot but be only imperfectly inward and spiritual, and must be far from fully moralized. The worship of Kṛiṣṇa is incurably idolatrous, and not the most violent transports of emotion transform it from the crude nature-worship of an image of a fair but altogether carnal youth. The 'god-vision' of Caitanya was a vision of the sensuous, with little enough in it of the spiritual. For that reason, in spite of pantheistic conceptions, it was seldom that the brotherly love that *bhakti* and every Theism must create operated far beyond the temple walls or at other times than on the festival day of the god. Then, and in these precincts, but seldom elsewhere, or at other times, the Brāhman and the Śūdra were reconciled. In this we have, probably, one of the causes of the double life that so many live in India, one at home and another in public. We have to say of such an ineffectual religion, as was said of Nāmdev in his earlier days by a wise potter, that it is *kacchā*, it is half-baked—like Nāmdev, it has not yet found its *guru*. It has the main outline, the framework which the cravings of the human heart provide, of a true Theism, but it lacks its content; it lacks that which surely cannot come from beneath, but must be poured into it from above. The grace of God, the need of a mediator, the power of devotion and of faith—these furnish, even as they are found in these wayward cults, an authentic map of Theism, its genuine form and contour. Could any word have a truer ring of theistic comprehension than this of Tukārām's, which is not his thought alone among the Indian seers, and which might well be St. Augustine's: 'Had I not been a sinner, how could there have been a Saviour? So my name is the source, and hence, O Sea of mercy, comes Thy purifying power. Iron is the glory of the

parīsa (loadstone), else had it been but an ordinary stone.'[1] It binds the sinner and the Saviour with true evangelical daring in a fellowship of the mutual dependence of love and help. And yet lacking a content of authentic revelation, how these forms presently become misshapen and distorted. With scarcely an exception, these Theisms, fair dreams of man's unguided hopes, have fallen from their high places to depths as deep as Tophet.

The fundamental difference between them and the Christian Theism lies in the fact that it possesses as its content Jesus Christ. The sole reason why it is possible for it to be at once a religion through and through of grace and yet altogether ethical is that it has at its centre this figure, Jesus Christ. Caitanya might, perhaps, say with St. Paul, 'I live by faith', but the fundamental distinction between him and St. Paul lies in the fact that the Christian apostle could go on to say—'the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me'. The *guru*, even the 'name'—strange and mystic intermediary—are claimed by Indian Theisms as means to bring near a far-off God. But how often was the *guru* as ignorant as his disciple, and only exalted above him by his priestly pride; and how frail a boat is an empty name to bear a man across the sea of *saṃsāra* to his God. But when the *guru* is One who, indeed, if His claim be true, is come from God, and speaketh the words of God, and when the name is all His character of grace and of compassion, then it well may be that these shall bear those who lay hold of them by faith to the place of the presence of the living and the holy God.

A Theism which makes its appeal to the heart of man as well as to his intellect, which sets before itself as its aim

[1] Fraser and Marāthe's *Tukārām*, i. p. 76. The same thought is found in the *Granth* (Trumpp, p. civ), and in more extreme and objectionable form in some South Indian sects.

throughout the establishment of the reign of God, and which bases its appeal upon a great historical act of self-sacrifice by God for man's redemption, and assures the accomplishment of its aim by reason of a great historical victory of life over death, of the order of spirit over the order of nature—a Theism also which claims that these things are verified in the experience of men as not only events of the past, but present activities of the divine life in human hearts—such a Theism can, indeed, accomplish what men's hearts have yearned for always, and certainly no less in India than in other lands. The Indian *bhakti* systems express these yearnings, but they lack elements that are necessary for their permanent satisfaction. What some of these elements are we have tried to indicate. Indian Theism is oftenest a cold discourse of reason that forgets that the heart has claims, and that the will requires a governor if it is not to be left to waywardness and to disaster. Or, again, Indian Theism is a carnival of emotion, its worshipper no longer a ship lying helpless on a painted ocean of the intellect, but driven headlong by what are only too apt to be blasts from hell. Or, again, the law of *karma* thwarts the processes of Theism in the Indian psychological climate, preventing the free ethical operation of the divine grace and the divine forgiveness. It is a sub-moral order, which has no room in it for the ministry of penitence, and which shuts out the possibility, in response to penitence, of the divine forgiveness. It is indeed true, as the facts of the world declare, that there is a surd, a factor that may prove insoluble even to divine power and grace, in the life of man, but that is not due to anything in the order of nature or in the will of God. It proceeds from the free will of man. Not a law of *karma*, but that moral freedom, which is the very manhood of man, hinders the consummation of God. Thus within Christian Theism there is room for all God's divine majesty and transcendence as there is not where *karma* reigns. His only limitation is self-limitation. The greater the freedom and capacity of His creatures, the greater He who rules them all and saves them.

'This Being rare has drawn near'[1] to us, as Indian *bhakti* dreamed and hoped He would, in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the faith of which He is the centre confirms the intuitions, and crowns the longings of the long centuries of Indian Theistic aspiration.

[1] Pope's *Tiruvāśagam*, p. 157.

APPENDIX A

B. C.	Indian Religious History.
2000	Earliest Vedic Hymns. Circa 1500–1000.
	Period of the Vedic Saṃhitās. Circa 1000–800.
	Period of the Brāhmaṇas. Circa 800–500.
600	The earliest Upaniṣads. Circa 600.
	Mahāvīra. 599–527.
	Gautama Buddha. 563–483.
	Period of the Sūtras. Circa 500–200 B. C.
	Period of the Rāmāyaṇa. Circa 400–200 B. C.
	Period of the Mahābhārata. Circa 400 B. C.–400 A. D.
	Later Upaniṣads. Circa 400–200 B. C.
	The Bhagavadgītā. Circa 100 B. C.–100 A. D.
A. D.	
500	Period of the Purāṇas. Circa 400–800.
	Śaṅkarācarya. 788–850.
	Māṇikka-vāśagar. X–XI cent.
1000	
	Rāmānuja. Died 1137.
	Nimbārka. XII cent.
	Madhva. XIII cent.
	Rāmānanda. XIII–XIV cent. Piḷḷai Lokācārya. XIII cent.
	Vedānta Deśika. XIII–XIV cent.
	Jñāneśvar. XIII cent.
	Nāmdev. XIII–XIV cent.
	Vallabhācārya. XV–XVI cent. Kabīr. Died 1518.
	Caitanya. 1485–1533. Nānak. 1469–1538.
	Dādū. 1544–1603. Tulsī Dās. 1532–1623.
	Tukārām. 1608–49.

HISTORICAL TABLE

Indian Secular History.	The World Outside India.
Aryans advancing into India.	Isaiah the Prophet. 737–700.
	Zoroaster. 660–583.
	Confucius. 551–478.
	Cyrus, king of Persia. 522–486.
Pāṇini. Circa 400–300.	Death of Socrates. 399.
Alexander the Great in India. 327–325.	Plato. 427–347.
Candragupta, founder of the Maurya Dynasty. 321–297.	Aristotle. 384–322.
Megasthenes at the Court of Candragupta. 302.	
Aśoka. 269–227.	
	Virgil. 73–19.
Patañjali. Circa 150.	Julius Caesar. 100–44.
	Augustus. 30 B.C.–14 A.D.
	Crucifixion of Jesus. 29.
	Conversion of Paul. 30.
	The New Testament. Circa 47–110.
	Marcus Aurelius. 161–180.
Kālidāsa. Circa 400.	Constantine. 306–337.
	Muḥammad. 570–632.
Hiouen Tsang in India. 629–646.	
Invasion of India by Muḥammadans. 998.	
Capture of Somnāth by Mahmud of Ghazni. 1025.	The Crusades. 1096.
Invasion of Taimūr. 1398.	Wyckliffe. 1324–84.
	Luther. 1483–1546.
Akbar. 1556–1605.	Queen Elizabeth. 1558–1603.
Aurangzeb. 1658–1707.	

APPENDIX B

EKANĀTH (SIXTEENTH CENTURY) ON *BHAKTI*

The superiority of Bhakti to Yoga.

Though one restrains the senses, yet are they not restrained. Though one renounces sensual desires, yet are they not renounced. Again and again they return to torment one. For that reason the flame of Hari *bhakti* was lit by the Veda.

There is no need to suppress the senses; desire of sensual pleasure ceases of itself. So mighty is the power that lies in Hari *bhakti*. Know this assuredly, O first among kings.

The senses that Yogīs suppress *bhaktas* devote to the worship of Bhagavat. The things of sense that Yogīs forsake *bhaktas* offer to Bhagavat. Yogīs forsake the things of sense, and forsaking them, they suffer in the flesh; the followers of *bhakti* offer them to Bhagavat, and hence they become for ever emancipated.

Wife, child, house, self, offer them to Bhagavat. That is the perfect Bhāgavat Dharma. In this above all else does worship consist.

The superiority of bhakti to jñāna.

Though he has no knowledge of the Vedas, still by one so ignorant may the real Self be apprehended. The condition of *Brahman* may be easily attained and possessed. To that end did God send forth the light of Hari *bhakti*.

Know, O king, that this is what belongs to Bhagavat. Especially is its token *bhakti*. Worshipping Bhagavat by faith the man who has no knowledge is delivered.

Women, Sūdras and all others—place them on board this ship and they all together and easily can be borne by the power of faith and worship to the other bank. To cross thither without swimming, to gain possession without painful effort, to obtain *Brahman* by an easy means, for this end Nārāyaṇ sent forth the light of *bhakti*.

The special quality of the Bhāgavat Dharma is that the simple-hearted are borne safe across the ocean of the world. *Brahman* is attained by an easy means. This meaning is expressed clearly in the *śloka*.

What bhakti is.

He who puts his trust in the worship of Bhagavat, rules and restrictions

become his slaves. When he renders the ritual service of his heart the World-Spirit is made glad. The marks of a saint are his power of devotion, how he tramples on the works of his *dharma*, how he sweeps clean the place of *varṇāśrama*, how he makes a bonfire of *karma*.

He who knows not Śruti or Smṛiti but worships by faith the way of Bhagavat, him never for a moment does the burden of rules and restrictions obstruct. Those who, lacking the two eyes, Śruti, Smṛiti, are blind, even they, fleeing by the might of faith to the worship of Hari, by reason of their full heart's love meet with no stumbling-block. Those who follow thus the Bhāgavat Dharma action (*karma*) cannot hinder. He whose will is a law to action (*karma*), that Purusottama is obtained by the worship of faith. Those who render service according to the Bhāgavat Dharma, to them the duty of their own *dharma* becomes as a bondslave. It cannot stand in their presence. How then can it ever hinder them?

Whatever is done with purpose of reward or what is done without, what the Vedas, what custom, what our own nature prescribes, offer them, one and all, to Bhagavat. Behold, that is the Bhāgavat Dharma.

He whom the duty of his *dharma* cannot hinder, hear, O king, his secret. Purusottama has been manifested in his heart by means of the knowledge of the illimitable Self.

Whenever the eye sees the visible, then (the *bhakta*) sees there God Himself. Thus by the means of worship he offers up his vision, namely, the objects that he sees.

In like manner when he hears with his ear, it is an offering to *Brahman*. Without deliberate intent, know this, spontaneously and naturally Bhagavat is worshipped.

He who brings together scent and the thing that has scent, he becomes (to the *bhakta*) the very sense of smell by reason of love.

When the sweets of taste are tasted, then its flavour is God Himself. He abides in the delight of taste and (the *bhakta*) perceives that the enjoyment of taste is an offering to *Brahman*.

When by our body we touch, then in the body the unembodied Self is manifested. Whatever (the *bhakta*) touches and whatever he enjoys, lo, it is an offering to *Brahman*.

Wherever he (the *bhakta*) sets his foot, that path is God. Then in every step he takes, lo, his worship is an offering to *Brahman*.

APPENDIX C

THE ALLEGED INDEBTEDNESS OF INDIAN THEISM TO CHRISTIANITY

THERE are many points of resemblance between the theistic cults of India and Christianity which suggest the possibility of indebtedness, but these fall for the most part into one or other of two classes,—those on the one hand that may be described as resemblances in idea and in the ritual which embodies ideas, and those on the other which depend upon likeness in the stories or legends that are associated with the divine figures in the various religions. The similarity in the former case is much more important than in the latter; but at the same time agreement between religions in respect of ideas and aspirations which often reach deep down into universal instincts and needs of the human heart need not, one recognizes, by any means necessarily imply borrowing on either side. In the case of the other class of resemblances, borrowing is more easily detected, perhaps, but it appears to be a matter of minor significance whether borrowing in such matters has actually taken place. These gather chiefly about the story of the child Kṛiṣṇa and such a legend as that of the visit to the 'White Island' described in the *Mahābhārata*.

The first thing to be done in considering the problems here involved is to see what communications there were in the early centuries between India and those lands to the west and north of India where Christianity was an established religion. There seem to have been three main routes of communication, (1) from Egypt and Alexandria, (2) from the Persian Gulf, and (3) from lands lying north of India in Central Asia.

(1) The intercourse between India and Alexandria was considerable, apparently, until early in the third century, when a massacre by the emperor Caracalla of the Alexandrians, among whom there was a small colony of Hindu traders, brought this to an end. A large number of coins of Roman emperors up to Caracalla have been found in South India, but few coins of emperors subsequent to him. As this intercourse with Alexandria was mainly in matters of trade, and as the Indians concerned in it were mainly of the less thoughtful classes of Dravidians, there is not likely to have been much, if any, interchange of religious ideas.

(2) The second route of communication is that between the Persian Gulf and the west coast of India. Christian and Jewish communities

were settled in this part of India, it appears, from the second century onward. Pantaenus journeyed to India in the second century and found there some Christians who used a Hebrew or Aramaic version of the Gospel of St. Matthew. In the sixth century when Cosmas Indicopleustes visited India, he found there a Christian Church said to have been founded in the second century. It had a Persian bishop.

(3) Another important direction from which it is not improbable that Christian thought may have entered India is that of the north-west frontier, by which so many invasions of India have taken place throughout the centuries. Just north of Afghanistan and corresponding to Afghan Turkestan lay a land which early in the Christian era was the home of many persecuted Christian sects. Successive expeditions of explorers in recent years have discovered further east in Chinese Turkestan, and especially in the oasis of Turfan, a large number of Christian documents, including much of the literature of the Manichaean sect. These are texts believed to have been written 'at some time before the tenth century for the use of a large Manichaean community'.[1] It is evident that there were important centres in this region from which Christian ideas must have been conveyed occasionally across the mountains to India. One of the bishops, indeed, who attended the great Council of Nicaea in A. D. 325 is designated 'Bishop of the Church of Persia and great India', which is understood to mean the India of the Indus valley and perhaps some distance beyond it. It is accepted as eminently probable now that there is a substance of truth in the legend of St. Thomas which tells of his coming to India to the kingdom of Gondoferus or Gondophares, who ruled over Parthia and the western Punjab in the first century. Whether or not there is any substance in the further tradition that he was buried in Mylapore near Madras,—and this is much less probable,—it is, to say the least, quite possible that he actually preached the Gospel in North West India.

These seem to be the main channels by which Christian ideas may have reached India in the early centuries. In later times, of course, from the seventh century onward, there were other Christian influences coming from various directions into the country.

We have now to consider whether there is any reliable evidence of the Christian influence which may have come to India by these, or, possibly, by other, channels having made any mark upon Indian theistic religion. Let us look in the first place at the legends which may be said to bear tokens of such influence. These are especially those that gather round the figure of the child Kṛiṣṇa. Here is Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's account of what he supposes to have possibly happened in this connexion:

[1] F. Legge in *J. R. A. S.*, Jan. 1913, p. 79.

'About the first century of the Christian era, the boy-god of a wandering tribe of cow-herds of the name of Ābhīras came to be identified with Vāsudeva. In the course of their wanderings eastward from Syria or Asia Minor they brought with them, probably, traditions of the birth of Christ in a stable, the massacre of the innocents, &c., and the name Christ itself. The name became recognized as Kṛiṣṇa, as this word is often pronounced by some Indians as Kriṣṭo or Kuṣṭo. And thus the traditional legends brought by the Ābhīras became engrafted on the story of Vāsudeva Kṛiṣṇa of India.'[1] That is an opinion that is shared by many scholars, and certainly there seems to be much to support it. No one can help being struck by numerous points of resemblance between the story of the child Kṛiṣṇa and that of the child Christ, though these are resemblances merely in outward detail and not at all in the spirit and atmosphere of the stories. The elements that are supposed to show Christian influence in the legend of Kṛiṣṇa are such as the honour paid to his mother Devakī, the birth in a stable, the massacre of children by Kaṃsa, the representation in Indian pictures of the mother suckling the child like a *Madonna lactans*. When one investigates, however, these incidents, one finds that the hypothesis of indebtedness has to be accepted with caution and a distinction made between some of the parallels and others.

We find, for example, that the enmity between the wicked Kaṃsa and his nephew Kṛiṣṇa is referred to as familiar in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (second century B. C.), and it is fair to conclude that the legend of the attempt of Kaṃsa to kill Kṛiṣṇa in his childhood, as well as that of his murder of the other children of Vāsudeva, as being the cause of that enmity, was also extant at that period. It has also been claimed that there is an earlier Indian representation of the suckling mother than any Christian picture known of the *Madonna lactans*. The association of Kṛiṣṇa with his mother Devakī is, of course, as old as the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. There are other considerations, which a comparison with similar worships to that of Kṛiṣṇa in other countries suggests, that strengthen the view that the cowherd god of the Ābhīras, even though worshipped as a child, need owe nothing to Christian story. Their deity, associated as he was with cattle, was probably originally a deity of the spring and the renewed life of nature, like Dionysus. It is accordingly interesting to note that Dionysus seems to have been worshipped as a child under the title Dionysus Liknites, a name taken 'from the cradle in which they put children to sleep'. The Maenads are Dionysus's nurses, and we see them paralleled, perhaps, in the Gopīs. Other similarities in the stories lead us to conclude that some of the aspects

[1] *Indian Antiquary*, Jan. 1912, p. 15. Cf. also his *Vaiṣṇavism*, pp. 37f.

of the Kṛiṣṇa story that give it a resemblance to the story of the child Christ, which is purely superficial and disappears on investigation, really spring from its character as a nature worship deifying the return of spring after the winter, and embodying in the person of the youthful Kṛiṣṇa the joy of that resurrection.

At the same time there seems good ground for believing that about the middle of the seventh century Nestorian missions (which are believed to have entered India from the north in the year 639) may have brought stories of the child Christ as well as pictures and ritual observances which affected the story of Kṛiṣṇa as related in the Purāṇas, and the worship of Kṛiṣṇa especially in relation to the celebration of his birth festival. To this belongs the birth in a cow-house among cattle, the 'massacre of the innocents', the story that his foster-father Nanda was travelling at the time to Mathurā to pay tax or tribute (*kara*) to Kaṃsa, and other details to be found in the various Purāṇas and in the *Jaimini Bhārata* (a work of date earlier than the beginning of the thirteenth century).

Another legend, in addition to this of the child Kṛiṣṇa, which we have to examine in our search for possible indebtedness, is that of the travellers to the *Śvetadvīpa*, as related in *Mbh.* XII. This is a country 'to the north of mount Meru and on the shore of the Sea of Milk'. That seems to point to a land in Central Asia, if the directions mean anything, and Professor Garbe has persuaded himself that the sea in question is Lake Balchash, which lies near one of the most important trade routes of Central India and has a Kirghis name which means 'white ocean'. Of the inhabitants of this land it is said that they have 'complexions as white as the rays of the moon and are devoted to Nārāyaṇa'. 'The inhabitants of Śvetadvīpa believe in and adore only one God', who is invisible. The highly imaginative character of the description of the land and the people, as well as some indications in the narrative that it is not to be taken literally, has convinced some scholars, such as Barth, Hopkins, and Bhandarkar, that the story is a mere flight of fancy and that the Śvetadvīpa is the heaven of Nārāyaṇa. If it has any basis at all in fact, it is most probable that it refers to some Christian settlement to the north of India.

When we come to consider the possibility of indebtedness to Christianity in idea and in the ritual that symbolizes idea, we are working in quite a different medium. The evidence that has been considered above is concerned entirely with detail of fact. Here the discussion, as has been said, 'belongs more to the region of feeling than to that of absolute proof'.[1] No one need suppose that the ideas that *bhakti* connotes are

[1] *E.R.E.*, V. 22[1].

a foreign importation into India. It has been shown that the word in its religious application is pre-Christian,[1] and that is what one would expect, for the attitude of soul that it implies, however it might have been overshadowed in India by Vedāntic speculation, is in agreement with human needs and longings. At the same time the feeling of 'loving faith' may well have been deepened and illuminated by Christian teaching when later that may have begun to influence the religious thought of India. Whether that was so and how far is a difficult question to answer.

The *Bhagavadgītā* is the earliest scripture in which Christian influence is possible, and that only if we date it, at least in one of its revisions, later than the beginning of the Christian era. Many parallels have been traced between its language and that of the New Testament, especially of the Gospel of St. John. A careful examination of these, however, shows the resemblances to be in many cases purely verbal and unreal, while others can be paralleled from Upaniṣads which are certainly pre-Christian. For example, when it is said (vii. 6), 'The source of the whole universe and its dissolution am I', and (x. 39) 'the seed of all born beings am I; there is naught that can be in existence, moving or unmoving without me', Kṛiṣṇa's relation to the world is really represented as entirely different from that which is claimed for the Word in the verse 'All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made' (John i. 3). 'What is there that one would call other (than me)?' asks the creating *Atman* in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*. Again, when Kṛiṣṇa says 'Of creations I am the beginning and the end and likewise the midst; . . . of letters I am the syllable A; . . . I am death that ravishes all and the source of all things to be' (x. 32–4), the likeness to the words in Revelation, 'I am the first and the last and the living one . . . and I have the keys of death . . . I am the Alpha and the Omega' (Rev. i. 17, 18, 8) is purely superficial. The difference is realized when it is remembered that the letter A is inherent in all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. Kṛiṣṇa's identification of himself with everything in the universe is in full agreement with the claims for *Brahman* in the Upaniṣads, and that among the lists of those things that he is there should be found some of the names, such as the truth, the light, the way, which are applied to Christ, and especially to Christ in His aspect as the eternal Word, is not surprising and cannot be said to prove indebtedness. The case for influence by Christian teaching on the *Gītā* is stronger in reference to such a passage as 'Those who are devoted to me in love are in me and I in them' (ix. 29), where there certainly seems to be much more of the spirit of the Christian gospel than can be traced in any earlier scripture. It is possible, however, to maintain that, as the loving

[1] See Garbe, *Indien und das Christenthum*, pp. 251 f.

faith of *bhakti* awoke spontaneously in Indian hearts, so the strengthening and deepening of the relation of love and devotion which such a passage indicates may have taken place through the working of the divine Spirit apart from the Christian revelation. The question of indebtedness in the case of the *Bhagavadgītā* cannot accordingly be answered in one way or the other with any confidence.

We are treading, as Professor Garbe remarks, on solid ground when we pass to consider the question of the influence of Christian teaching on the ideas of later Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite theism. That such influence was considerable and increasing from about the eighth century onwards seems highly probable, but to determine its extent and to point out just where it is present in particular is by no means easy. We shall only attempt to note a few points in some of the theistic schools where Christian influence seems to be fairly certain.

It seems highly probable, when we consider the region in which the revival of *bhakti* in the time of Rāmānuja took place, and its nearness to the Nestorian Christians of South India, that he had some acquaintance with Christian truth. In the opinion of Grierson and Garbe his 'conversion' from the school of Śaṅkara to the Bhāgavata religion was due to Christian influence.[1] This, however, can only be a conjecture. The religious exclusiveness,—so different from the easy tolerance that usually characterizes Indian religion,—which we find in Rāmānuja and Madhva (see pp. 101 f., 114 above), may betray the influence of Christian teaching. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar finds in the doctrine of surrender to the *guru* 'a striking resemblance to the Christian doctrine of Christ suffering or, in the words of our author, going through the processes necessary for redemption, the believer doing nothing but putting complete faith in his saviour'.[2] This view is also held by Dr. Grierson, but we agree with Professor Garbe that the influence of the *guru* is thoroughly Indian and ancient, though it is possible that the relation of the Christian to Christ may have done something to deepen the conception. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar is probably on surer ground when he suggests that 'some of the finer points in the theory of *prapatti* may be traced to the influence of Christianity'.[3] This is in agreement with our view that the whole intensification of the spirit of *bhakti*, of which the doctrine of *prapatti* is an instance, may be due to Christian sentiment making itself felt in the South. Again, it is the view of Dr. Grierson and of Professor Garbe that the sacramental meal or *mahāprasāda*, as it is found here, 'shows points of agreement with the Christian Eucharist which cannot be mere matters of chance'.[4] Certainly

[1] Garbe's *Indien und das Christenthum*, p. 273.

[2] Bhandarkar's *Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 57.

[3] Bhandarkar, op. cit., p. 57.

[4] *E.R.E.*, II. p. 550.

this appears to be the case in regard to this ceremony as observed among the Kabīr Panthīs.[1]

In the case of Madhva the following points of varying importance have been indicated as betraying evidence of his having come under Christian influences: (1) his doctrine of eternal punishment (see p. 113 above) which may have been suggested by mediaeval Christian teaching in regard to the future life; (2) the doctrine of salvation through a mediator, Vāyu, son of Viṣṇu, an idea which is to be found in embryo in the teaching of Rāmānuja (see p. 109 above); (3) stories told in Madhva's life which resemble incidents in the Gospels, such as his visiting temples when a boy, his spending forty-eight days in fasting and prayer before beginning to teach, his miraculous feeding of a multitude, and the description in his life of Mādhvas as 'fishing for souls'.[2]

It is claimed that Christian influences are traceable in all the popular cults of the Indian mediaeval period, in Rāmānanda, who had twelve disciples, and Tulsī Dās in the north, in the Marāṭha poets in the west, and in Śiva *bhakti* in the south. In regard to the last, that there has been such influence is the opinion both of Dr. Pope and of Mr. R. W. Frazer, who are well acquainted with the literature. The latter says, 'Throughout Tamil literature from the eighth to ninth century there are to be found ideas and sometimes totally unexpected forms of expression suggestive of some Christian influences on the poetry of the period.'[3]

In regard to Marāṭhī poetry there are many passages and phrases that could be quoted which are closely parallel to Christian thought and language. In Jñāneśvar it is said, for example, that Kṛiṣṇa makes those devoted to him 'fit for the kingdom of heaven (Vaikuṇṭha)'. That is a striking phrase which certainly has a decidedly Christian sound. Again, Nāmdev has this remarkable passage in one of his poems: 'When a man breaketh with his family and all his friends, then the Carpenter of his own accord cometh to him.' An examination of this passage, however, shows that the coincidence in language is probably accidental. Similar exhortations to be found in Tukārām, as well as much besides in the whole spirit and language of his *Abhaṅgs*, make it decidedly probable that he at least had somehow or other come under the influence, either directly or indirectly, of Christian thought. This is the view of Mr. J. Nelson Fraser who, in collaboration with Mr. K. B. Marathe, has translated his poems into English and who has supplied some passages in support of his contention. Thus Tukārām says, 'Whatever keeps you from God, be it your father or mother, give it up'

[1] See Westcott, pp. 127 ff.

[2] C. M. Padmanabhachar's *Madhva*, p. 266 f.

[3] *E. R. E.*, V. p. 22².

(Fraser and Marathe, I. p. 171). 'Blessed in the world are the compassionate; their true home is Vaikuṇṭha' (op. cit., I. p. 233). Compare Matt. v. 7—'Blessed are the merciful'. 'Mercy, forgiveness, and peace,—where these are, there is the dwelling-place of God' (op. cit., I. p. 231). 'To each has been shown a path according to his capacity; he will learn to know it as he follows it' (op. cit., I, p. 27). Compare John vii. 17, 'If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching'. 'I will cast my burden on thee, O Pāṇḍuraṅga' (op. cit., I, p. 29). 'I am a man of low degree, feeble in brain, miserable in aspect; other defects of mine too he knows; yet Viṭṭhal has accepted me, knowing what my purpose is' (op. cit, I. p. 29). These passages, so Christian in sentiment as well as in language, could be multiplied. Mr. Fraser further draws attention to the frequent denunciations of pride in Tukārām's writings, as the cause of spiritual blindness, in close agreement with Christian teaching. Certainly either Tukārām was actually in contact with Christian teaching, which is by no means improbable, or he was a remarkable instance of a *mens naturaliter Christiana*. Dr. Grierson has adduced much evidence to show that Christian influences were at work among the north Indian saints of the *Bhaktamālā*, and there is little reason to doubt that similar influences were present among the Marāṭha saints of further south.

APPENDIX D

THE MĀNBHĀŪ SECT

THIS sect may be taken as an example of many minor sects, largely theistic in character, to which it has been impossible to refer. The name is said to be a corruption of *Mahānubhāva*, i. e. 'high-minded'. Another title given to members of the sect is *Mahātmā.* They are found in the Deccan and the Berars, and are said also to have *maṭhs* or religious houses in the Punjāb and even in Afghānistān. At the census of 1901 they numbered 22,716. They seem to have arisen in the thirteenth century, when the Bhāgavata faith was reviving in the Marāṭha country, and when Jñāneśvar was writing his Marāṭhī commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā.* Their founder is said to have been Śrī Cakradhar a Karhāda Brāhman.

They worship Kṛiṣṇa and Dattātreya, the latter as an incarnation of the supreme deity. 'They do not worship idols, and have no faith in the *śruti* or *purāṇic* religion of the Hindus. They neither worship other gods, nor stay, or even drink water, in other temples.' At most of their temples they have 'quadrangular or circular white-washed terraces which they worship in the name of God'. Their chief religious scripture is the *Līlacarita*, which is written in Marāṭhī. It is said to teach the doctrines of the *Bhagavadgītā*, which they reverence. They follow *Īśvarabhakti.* They admit all classes of Hindus, except outcastes, to their sect, and within it no caste distinctions are recognized. 'A Brāhman of the lower class can become a *mahanta* (i. e. principal guru) by merit and can initiate a Brāhman.' There are four main divisions, of which two are the *vairāgī*, or strictly celibate class, and the *gharbhārī*, who wear the dress of the order and live in *maṭhs*, but are allowed to marry. The *vairāgīs* practise celibacy, and the men celibates and women celibates remain apart from each other, the latter under a female *mahanta* of their own. 'Women and men never hold a joint service.'

One of their principles is *nitya aṭan*, or constant wandering, though they have *maṭhs* at certain places. The *sannyāsī's* robe which they wear is of a dark colour, being dyed with lamp-black. They go from village to village in companies of from fifty to one hundred persons, maintaining themselves by begging. They practise *ahiṃsā* (non-killing) with much strictness, not even cutting grass or plucking leaves or fruit, and using

water for bathing or drinking very sparingly. There are various grades and divisions of the initiates. Their religious books are kept secret, and for that reason are written in a secret script. Perhaps because of this secrecy they seem to have aroused much suspicion, and are severely criticized by such Marāṭhī poets as Ekanāth and Tukārām. They were apparently persecuted in the time of the Marāṭha Peśvas, and are described in a public notification of the time as a thoroughly disreputable sect. They appear to have been especially disliked by the *Vārkarīs*, or worshippers of Viṭhobā. This may have been due not only to the secrecy which they practised, but also to their religious exclusiveness, an attitude unusual in Hinduism, but occasionally found in theistic sects in India, e.g. among the Mādhvas and the followers of Rāmānuja. Though they are Vaiṣṇavas, 'the worshippers at the shrines of Paṇḍharpūr, Gaṅgapūr, and Dwārkā will not allow them to worship at their shrines. The sect appears to have been regarded as heterodox.'

There are respects in which the practices of this sect recall practices within some of the early Christian sects, such as the Manichaeans. It may be possible on a closer investigation to decide whether Christian influences have been present here.

NOTE.—On the subject of the Mānbhāūs see Monograph No. 131 of the Ethnographical Survey of Bombay, and a paper by Mr. K. A. Padhye in the *Transactions* of the Anthropological Society of Bombay (Vol. x).

APPENDIX E

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For the theistic tendencies of the religion during the periods of the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas, and the Upaniṣads, the standard works of Macdonell (*Vedic Mythology*), Bloomfield (*Religion of the Veda*), Hopkins (*Religions of India*), and Barth (*Religions of India*) should be consulted. In the two last named much information in reference to later theistic aspects of Hinduism will also be found. On later phases of Indian Theism some of the more important books, chiefly those obtainable in English, are given below.

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